DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 204 316 SP 018 558

AUTHOR Sanders, Donald P.; Schwab, Marian
TITLE Annehurst: The Natural History of a Good School.
INSTITUTION Kappa Delta Pi, West Lafayette, Ind.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 86p.
AVAILABLE FROM Kappa Delta Pi, P.O. Box A, West Lafayette, IN 47906 ($4.00 each; 10-24 copies, $3.25 each; 25-100 copies, $2.75 each).

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Education; *Elementary Schools; *Experimental Schools; *Open Education; Open Plan Schools; Parent School Relationship; Principals; School Community Relationship; *School Supervision; *Teacher Participation; *Teaching Conditions
IDENTIFIERS *Annehurst School OH

ABSTRACT

The Annehurst School (Westerville, Ohio) has become known as a school that works. More than just a success story, Annehurst has provided the setting for educational researchers to dissect classroom practices, teacher attitudes, management styles, and community-school relationships. Annehurst began in 1970 with a new open school building, a new principal, and 13 teachers. The school now has a teaching staff of 19 regular and eight part time special teachers for 450 students from kindergarten to fourth grade. Initial reactions to developments at the school were not all positive--there was resentment from other schools in the district, where Annehurst became known as the "golden ghetto," and parents were concerned and suspicious. However, the principal emphasized the need for collective decision making, and the staff became a cohesive team. Gradually, a pattern of cooperation evolved: parents became more involved with expanding the school programs; a successful series of staff development programs was organized and managed by one of the teachers; and a cooperating venture with a local university was set up, leading to the publication of the "Annehurst Curriculum Classification System". Difficulties were experienced with a Title III grant and a district teacher strike, but, for the ten years of Annehurst's operation, teaching and learning experiences there have been overwhelmingly positive. (FG)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED204316

© Kappa Delta Pi, 1981

Annehurst:

The Natural History of a Good School

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
✓ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. Jay Hostetler
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Donald P. Sanders
Marian Schwab

Donald P. Sanders is professor, College of Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Marian Schwab is assistant professor, Athenaeum of Ohio, Cincinnati, Ohio.

SP 018 558

The purpose of Kappa Delta Pi is to recognize outstanding contributions to education. To this end it invites to membership such persons who

exhibit commendable personal qualities worthy educational ideals, and sound scholarship, without regard to race, color, religion, or sex.

Extra Copies of Annehurst: The Natural History of a Good School are available at the following prices:

1-9 copies	$4.00 each
10-24 copies	$3.25 each
25-100 copies	$2.75 each
More than 100 copies	Contact Kappa Delta Pi for Special Price

Published by Kappa Delta Pi
An Honor Society in Education
P.O. Box A
West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

© Kappa Delta Pi, 1981

Contents

Chapter 1	Annehurst—A Good School	1
Chapter 2	A Growing Place	13
Chapter 3	Coming of Age	29
Chapter 4	An Experimenting School	61
Chapter 5	The Meaning of the Story	75

1

Annehurst — A Good School

Out in the midlands of Ohio is a public school named Annehurst School which looks like any other modern, open space elementary school. It is set in a middle class suburban area, referred to as Annehurst Village, which is near an old college town fast becoming a bedroom community for workers in the state capital.

The town has none of the pressing social conditions that form the backdrop for grueling problems in urban schools. Families are young, white, middle class, upwardly mobile, and somewhat transient as a part of their upward mobility. Parents are relatively well educated and able to provide rich home experiences for their children. They have high expectations of their children, pressuring them to succeed.

A school in such a neighborhood has everything going for it. A casual visitor would expect a model of contemporary education—teachers would be enthusiastic about teaching and children would be eager to learn. Parents would be supportive of teachers, and work hard in parent-teacher organizations to promote the welfare of the school. The principal would be an enlightened humanist who would draw together a caring staff committed to the development of children. The program would be highly creative. The students would all perform well on standardized achievement tests, reflecting their mastery of basic skills. Never would a discouraging word be heard in the teachers' lounge.

While a hypothetical visitor might come with such expectations, teachers experienced in suburban schools would tend to be more skeptical. Experienced teachers know that, however good the suburban social context is in contrast to that which surrounds deteriorating urban schools, few schools are in real life the havens of academic joy that the American public education myth says they should be.

In many schools a pecking order is evident, extending from superintendent to students. Discussions in the teachers' lounge are often full of gossip about the adults and put-downs about the children. Principals are often aloof from teachers, touring the building only on a formal basis, and holding staff meetings whether or not there is anything important to be communicated.

Teachers are commonly ignored as legitimate participants in the making of decisions which affect them; principals hold tightly to the reins of authority. Only behind the classroom door do many teachers feel they can act intelligently to control their own realities. Yet hiding in the classroom only heightens isolation. Those having problems—often new teachers confronting issues of discipline for the first time—are ashamed that they are not doing better, but they can find few safe places to go for help.

Territoriality often becomes an issue among teachers as they compete for status, guarding their ideas and instructional materials. Socializing outside school hours is predictably rare in such school situations. Teachers who have to be with one another all day simply want to get away once the dismissal bell rings.

In most schools, at least some of these problems are evident. Sometimes all are. All have to do with the social reality in which adults work, which then forms the backdrop for the experience of the children. All relate to the professional life of classroom teachers—those in closest contact with the students whom the institution is created to serve. The fact that a building is relatively new, that it is in a neighborhood where junkies are rare and few children have even seen a switchblade does not necessarily mean that the day-to-day experience for children or adults is happy or conducive to learning.

To create a positive "climate for learning" sounds like something Miss Frances would suggest from her experience in Ding-Dong School. However sentimental "climate for learning" sounds, it takes on serious meaning when applied to the social environment in which thousands of teachers and students work out their lives.

Is it possible for children—not the exceptional but the masses of children who attend public schools—to gain a sense that learning is meaningful work for them? Is it possible for teachers to believe that they are engaged in an important collective task in the education of children—a task demanding that they themselves develop as persons and face problems together? Is it possible for a principal to maintain the kind of authority needed to keep a school intact, and

yet to communicate such caring about the school staff that his or her confidence in them is a constant buoy in stormy times?

The story of Annehurst offers the promise that such things are possible. An unspectacular looking public school, staffed by teachers without particularly special characteristics, set in the suburb of Westerville, Ohio, it is a good place for learning and teaching. By all reports, Annehurst is a good school.

Reports of the quality of Annehurst School have been circulating for some years now. Annehurst has gained a name, both in this country and abroad, for innovative work in the area of individualized instruction. Graduate students have conducted studies for dissertations there, and local university professors have offered their help, intrigued by what staff people were accomplishing on their own. But not until recently did two of us (both of us educators interested in qualitative research of educational settings) decide that we should investigate the success of the school. Neither of us, however, was trained or experienced in elementary education. Although we believed we had the background to understand the school as a social entity—not only because of our theoretical understanding of education in general, but because of our special focus on educational development—we felt that we would be approaching the culture of an elementary school with naivete worthy of American anthropologists in a Mexican village. We had very basic questions to ask. We wanted to investigate from the inside what the basis was for the reported good climate for learning. If such a climate existed, we wanted to discover how it was created and maintained. When we got an opportunity to study Annehurst, we jumped at the chance.

The basic stance of our inquiry was ethnographic. One of us became a participant observer, spending at least two days each week in the school for a full academic year. Observations were made systematically in classes, on the playground—anywhere important activity seemed to be going on. The richest source of information was the teachers' lounge, which served as the hub of all that happened in the school.

The observer kept detailed notes of events and interactions and frequently talked informally with staff members and students to discover the meaning of what was happening. Some formal interviews were conducted with staff members, as well as with former staff members and outside consultants with substantial experience in the school. Many of these informants offered us reports and notes which they had collected over the years. These interviews, observa-

tions, and records provided the basis for the account which follows.

The story of the development of the school, as we have come to understand it, is rich and complex, and most of all, encouraging to those who care about the learning and growth of children. Even so, the definitely positive tone of this account deserves some explanation.

We began our inquiry with a neutral—even skeptical—attitude toward the glowing reports we had heard. We were determined to seek out the plain truth about this school.

Despite our efforts to identify every problem, however, it still turned out a success story. We worry about this. Will school people really want to read about a successful school? After all, accounts of failure are almost always more gripping than accounts of successes. What kind of positive title could we invent which could grab the imagination as did Rist's *The Urban School: A Factory for Failure?*

If we could capture school people's imaginations, would beleaguered teachers feel that we were preaching at them about how things should work in their schools? Or would they be able to see through the successful image that emerges to the real problems that the teachers and principal in this school have confronted and continue to confront?

Would readers see anything in our account from which they could generalize to their own situations? It is, after all, only a single school that we have investigated. We could hardly claim that it was a random sample. On the other hand, we never intended to describe how schools in general—or even good schools in general—operate. We wanted to see how this particular good school manages to do what it does, how its climate for learning suffuses it as a complex whole. Would school people who have never heard of Annehurst be able to see some of their own hopes and symbols, their own experiences and struggles, reflected in the story of Annehurst? Without really knowing the answers to those questions, we decided the story was important enough to justify the risk.

To minimize subjective bias in this account, we used a variety of means. Observations we made were cross-checked with other witnesses whenever possible, and multiple perspectives were presented when more than one interpretation seemed possible. In addition, our assessment of the evidence was reviewed for accuracy by four key informants who have had long, personal involvement in the school. We asked them to advise us about whether it conforms to their experience. We then revised the story, so the result repre-

seems the most accurate description of Annehurst's social reality that we could construct. That is not to say that our interpretation was agreed to by all participants. We do claim, however, that our interpretation is consistent with the facts, is plausible, and is concurred with (for the most part) by those who lived it. We believe that it may serve other educators as a source of insights into the creation of good climates for learning.

In many ways, Annehurst is unremarkable as an elementary school in present day America. Constructed in 1970 as the first open space building in the district, it was designed to house two kindergarten and eighteen primary and middle-grade classes, with space for special instruction, a multi-purpose room, a gym, and a media center. As the floor plan (Figure 1) indicates, the teachers' lounge, media center, and administrative offices are all located at the center of the building. This physical arrangement permitted the lounge to be the hub of social interaction among adults in the school—a factor of great importance to the development of the culture of Annehurst.

Although the school at one time housed some 600 students in kindergarten through grade six, presently about 450 are enrolled in kindergarten through grade four. Grade level organization has varied over the years, but currently operates with four organizational sub-units: kindergarten, grades 1 and 2 in Cluster A, grades 2 and 3 in Cluster B, and grades 3 and 4 in Cluster C.

The teaching staff of nineteen regular and eight special (part time) teachers is supported by a principal, secretary, nurse, and two custodians. Three of the regular teachers are men who, like the women, are relatively young and well educated. Teachers range in age from twenty-two to fifty-two and the average age for a teacher is about thirty. The average teaching experience is about 7 years, with a mean of 4.3 years tenure at Annehurst. Of the nineteen regular teachers, eight have Master's degrees or the equivalent (six received Master's degrees while employed at the school).

These basic characteristics of Annehurst are typical of many relatively new schools in America. But Annehurst is distinctly atypical in some important respects.

First, Annehurst is regarded by virtually all who know it as a good school. Intelligence test scores of the fourth grade students as reflected in the *Cognitive Abilities Test* have remained relatively constant over the years (see Table 1). On the other hand, scores on achievement as measured by the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* show

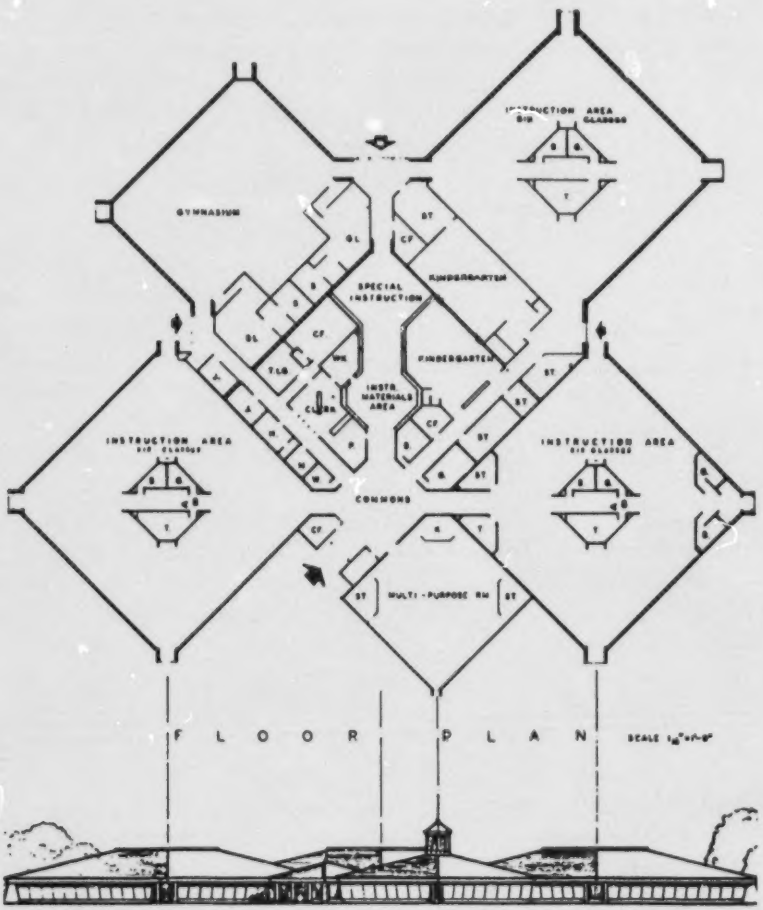
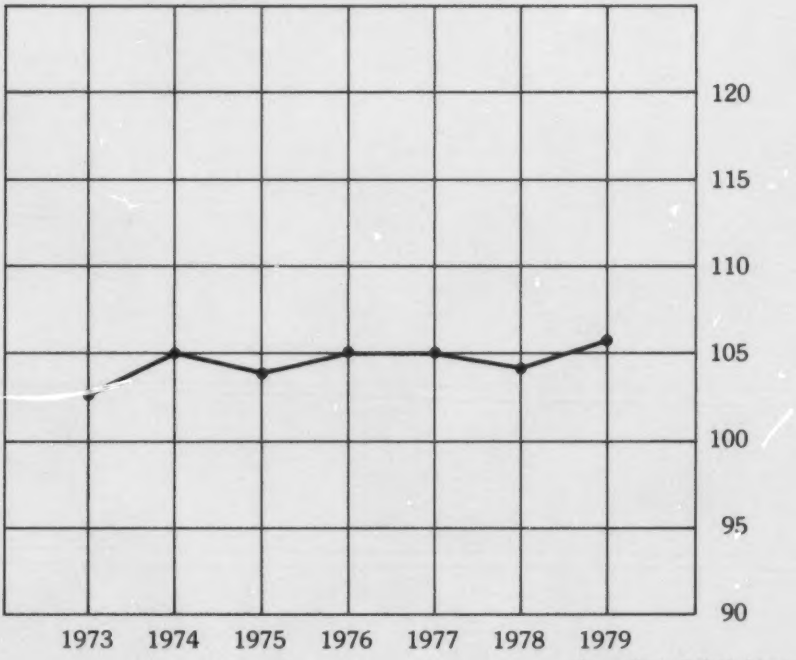


Figure 1. Floor Plan for Annehurst School, Westerville, Ohio

students clearly above grade level, with the average level of achievement for all fourth graders in the school improving dramatically over the years (see Table 2). While this evidence of success in the achievement dimension of schooling is substantial, the staff takes more pride in indications that the range of achievement at Annehurst is narrower than in the district as a whole. This they interpret as a sign of their success with individualized instruction, through which they are able to teach effectively the whole spectrum of students, even those of lower ability.

TABLE 1

Grade Four Annehurst Intelligence Scores As Measured
by *Cognitive Abilities Test*
1973 - 1979



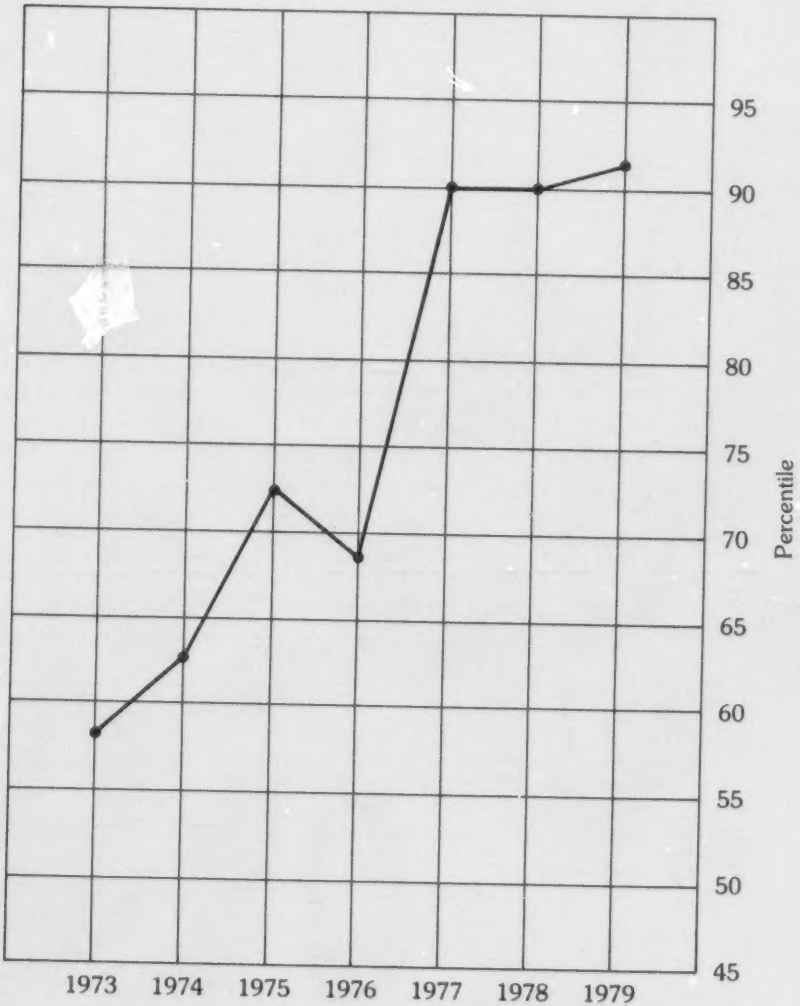
Source: Westerville Public Schools

Besides these "hard" data, considerable qualitative evidence indicates that Annehurst is a good school. Parents today consistently respond in positive terms when asked for their assessment either formally or informally. In addition, the many inquisitive educators who have spent time at Annehurst in recent years have judged it a good school although viewing it from a wide variety of specialized perspectives.

Even more important, the students of the school think it is a good place to be. Their level of interest, commitment, and hard work at the business of learning is overwhelmingly impressive to observers familiar with "typical" schools. Discipline problems are few. There is no vandalism and no violence. There are few play-

TABLE 2

Grade Four Annehurst Achievement Scores As Measured
by *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*
1973 - 1979



Source: Westerville Public Schools

12

ground fights ever, the principal reports, and in some years none at all. Student attitudes as expressed on teacher-made questionnaires are preponderantly positive toward the experience of learning. While it is impossible to present hard evidence proving the claim that this is a good school—in part because what constitutes a good school is disputed, and in part because attitudinal and perceptual data are suspect—the great bulk of the evidence available to us indicates a strong and general consensus about the quality of the school.

Another way in which Annehurst is distinctive is in the attitudes and perceptions of the adults who work there: teachers love to teach in this school. Their enjoyment of their lives as teachers is evident. It is reflected in the unusually long hours they spend and the intense effort they put into their work. Without reservation, teachers voluntarily begin to prepare for the school year in early August, without extra compensation, even though their contracts call for 185 days of work beginning in early September.

Enthusiasm for their work is reflected in still another way: all teachers in the school are involved in some form of graduate education currently, and many teachers have been involved each year since the school was founded. They pursue these further studies with a seriousness that goes beyond that common to teachers seeking more credits in order to get salary increments. Annehurst teachers seem to see themselves as growing, developing professionals who believe they teach well now and are working hard to learn to teach even better in the future.

Also distinctive is the Annehurst ethos—a way of being which is genuinely rare. This ethos is dimly represented in the simple language of a program document sent to each parent (Figure 2) and in the school's statement of goals (Figure 3). This ethos is not just talk. It is a daily reality in the lives of the children and adults who work at the school. It serves as a lodestone, as a guide for action by members of the school—in individual as well as in group and interpersonal behavior.

This ethos, this shared cultural way of approaching the work of learning and teaching, is what this story is about. The significance of Annehurst lies mainly in what it is doing for its adults and children. Because the full social reality of any school is so complex—and by its nature not fully comprehensible to any observer, no matter what his or her resources or training—we can give readers no more than a glimpse, a fragment of the meaning that this school has for those who are involved.

Philosophy

The open-space design at Annehurst School facilitates instructional approaches which focus on the child and his unique differences. This basic philosophy has led the staff into ongoing inquiries into self-managed professional growth, self-evaluation on the part of the child and instructional processes which are directed toward continuous progress in each individual, as well as the encouragement of thoughtful decision-making in the pupil.

Organization

Annehurst is organized into four teams: Kindergarten, Cluster A (Levels 1 and 2), Cluster B (Levels 3 and 4), and Cluster C (Levels 4 and 5). Each team has a team leader who is responsible for conducting team meetings and coordinating cluster activities. Group interaction determines the needs of each cluster in regard to curriculum planning, social development, scheduling, professional growth and use of specialists, volunteers, and community resources to further develop and enrich learning.

Instruction

The instructional approach at Annehurst is based on the premise that the child is an end in himself, not a means to another's end. The children are grouped at different times on the basis of academic and social needs, and on individual interest. The child experiences a daily balance between working independently and interacting in groups as a necessary part of social development. Progress is enhanced by self-motivation and self-pacing and in some areas the child diagnoses, prescribes, and evaluates his own performance.

Tutors and Paraprofessionals

Peer tutors are used both to reinforce their own previously learned concepts and to share skills with one another. Volunteers are a very vital part of the instructional process, helping to personalize and individualize instruction.

Goal

The scope of individual differences is capitalized upon to foster the achievement of each child's maximum potential.

Figure 2. The Program at Annehurst School

1. To develop in students an understanding of how they should interact with one another in a positive way, showing true consideration and understanding for each other as well as developing their own self-discipline.

2. To assure that each individual child is meeting with success, and is developing a feeling of importance within himself reaching towards his maximum potential in his mental abilities.

3. To provide a valuable and worthwhile education for each student by providing for all individuals a solid foundation in the basics of education and by meeting each individual's needs.

4. To assure that each child has achieved to the best of his ability the material which was covered during that time period of education.

5. As a school to become familiar with and to utilize the vast amount of academic resources both within the school and those in our surrounding communities.

6. To provide a variety of means by which teachers can meet the needs of the parents in communicating with them their child's progress along with the objectives of the school and events taking place.

7. To provide a healthy, positive atmosphere in which staff would work and interact together so as to capitalize on the individual talents of each teacher.

Figure 3. Annehurst School Goals

We believe the story of Annehurst is important for other educators. It is important, not because any other school should be exactly like Annehurst, but because Annehurst shows that a good school can exist and sustain itself over a substantial period of time. What this story offers most to other educators, perhaps, is hope—hope that seems today like a scarce commodity in American education but which is essential for the improvement of schools. This story does not offer "tricks" or methods for creating a good climate for

learning that have been "researched and developed" according to current convention. It may, however, suggest useful insights to people who care about, and have responsibility for, the climate for learning of students in other schools.

Some may protest that no useful insights can be drawn from the experience of such a privileged school in such a tranquil and affluent community. Such an assertation is valid, we submit, only if what the protesters are looking for is a tested, concrete, operational procedure to follow. Literal replication of the events or procedures experienced at Annehurst is clearly impossible. At a more general level—a level of insight into principles of process—it may be easier than a skeptic would expect to identify factors that contribute in powerful ways to Annehurst's climate. Such insights, if they can be discovered, may be useful sources of hypotheses to try in other settings. We hope that the Annehurst story will encourage other educators in their work to believe in the possibility of more humane and effective climates for learning. The validity of Thomas' dictum has been confirmed for us in our study of Annehurst: "If people define situations as real, they are real in their consequences."

2

A Growing Place

Late in winter, 1970, a quiet man from Kentucky became interim principal at Hanby School in Westerville. The regular principal had taken a leave of absence to finish doctoral work, and many people assumed his absence would be permanent.

Meanwhile, construction proceeded on the district's first open space school. Two large instructional areas and a smaller one were to be grouped around an office, media center, workroom, and teachers' lounge. Even as the school was being built, other principals criticized its design: it was a monstrosity. The roofs would blow off with the first big wind. No one would ever be able to operate a school in all that open space. Troy Mills, the quiet Kentuckian, was not so sure.

Troy had been a principal for a long time, and recently had worked at a federally-funded research and development laboratory. That last assignment had involved two years of traveling around the country studying schools. Troy was convinced that open space schools could work. He had been hired by the district specifically to be principal at the new open space school in Annehurst Village. Filling in for the absent principal at Hanby School provided an easy entry into the district's administrative staff. Troy would have a certain amount of credibility among principals because he himself had been a principal for years. On the other hand, he had most recently worked at one of those R&D labs where they come up with all those good ideas that do not work. So Troy maintained a low profile.

The community of Westerville was experiencing at this time a demographic challenge to its identity. Otterbein College had been its center for a hundred years. Westerville had pursued middle class, college town life with decorum. In recent years, however, the people of Columbus, twelve miles away, had begun regarding Westerville as a suburb—far enough away from city problems, but close enough to make commuting feasible.

Roads were suddenly too narrow. Rows of apartment buildings sprang up close to farm houses. Whole villages, like Annehurst, were built on the outskirts of Westerville, with large development houses crowded onto small lots. Young, upwardly mobile couples starting families began organizing new community activities. The schools became overcrowded.

Putting up a new school seemed a necessity, and an open space building was the most economical. By administrative fiat, therefore, an architect was hired and the foundation poured. No other open space school existed in the district, and no educational specifications had been set forth for this one.

From his vantage point at Hanby School, such circumstances did not seem unmanageable to Troy Mills. He had been told he could hire seven teachers from the district and six from outside for the new Annehurst School. They could be masters of their own destiny. Teachers who would volunteer for the first open school in a basically conservative district could be counted on to see themselves as innovators, especially at a time before open schools became a fad. Troy would just have to find able, talented teachers to make up a staff, and then they could build the school from the ground up.

When teachers began volunteering for the new school, Troy found two of the most promising candidates at Hanby. One of these was Mary Cay Wells, who was later to become the Annehurst School's staff developer.

The spring of 1970 proved to be a generative time. The seven teachers Troy chose were enthusiastic and committed to the idea of creating a good school in this completely different space. Those teachers worked with Troy from March until June making plans for their new setting. Mary Cay Wells, always full of ideas, had long talks with Troy, discussing how the school might be organized.

The group made fundamental decisions about the school's orientation that spring. The program would be individualized and personalized. Each child would be able to work at his or her own pace, challenged to his or her full potential. The media center would be a place well-stocked with materials, where youngsters could do many projects on their own.

No other school in the district had an individualized program, and the burgeoning staff was excited about all the new possibilities they could envision at Annehurst. They worked out for themselves a statement of their philosophy, with five basic principles of child growth and development:

- Each child is unique, and has his own rate and pattern of physical, mental, social, and emotional growth. These rates differ widely, and we feel children grow best when allowed to proceed at their own rate in competition with themselves, and not with someone else as in a graded situation.
- Learning is enhanced when each child is placed in a situation where it is possible for him to experience success and where his individual needs are met. The most conducive atmosphere for learning is a democratic atmosphere.
- All children face certain common "developmental tasks" and should work at those tasks when they reach the appropriate maturity level.
- Growth is continuous from the beginning of life until life ceases.
- The same child possesses different levels of maturity for different skills and abilities.

During the spring and continuing into the summer of 1970, four of the Westerville teachers designed a math program—packets of materials with individualized objectives and activities, pretests, and posttests. For reading programs, the teachers decided to continue much the same approach as they had been using. The children would read trade books, often aloud to the teacher, who would diagnose skill needs and find ways for students to work on those areas individually. Students would report on books they were reading and have numerous individual conferences and skill meetings in small groups.

With math and reading as the only programs really worked out, the school opened in September 1970 with first to third graders in one cluster, fourth to sixth graders in the other, and kindergarteners in their own kindergarten area.

Six new teachers had been hired before school began, only two of whom had had any teaching experience at all. They were quickly caught up in the rampant enthusiasm of the experienced teachers, catching onto the spirit of the Annehurst dream. High expectations were evident, and the new teachers responded with a healthy attitude of openness toward the experienced teachers.

The new teachers alternated with the experienced ones in

grouping "rooms" around the cluster areas. The inexperienced teachers were often intimidated by the expertise around them, and sometimes exploded in frustration over their own inadequacies. Gradually first year teachers, who had shown potential as authoritarian taskmasters, grew instead toward the image of calm purposiveness projected by their experienced counterparts. They picked up techniques of classroom management almost by osmosis and developed teaching styles which fit them individually.

Troy spent hours talking with the new teachers, affirming their strengths, and supporting them through what he said were always traumatic times. He promised them that teaching would get easier, and he helped them with problems they identified themselves.

Yet the new teachers were not the only ones having difficulties. The ambitiousness of the Annehurst undertaking was becoming clearer to the whole staff. Materials ordered during the summer were slow in coming in, and the teachers felt they were limping along with too few resources. When they investigated why so few materials were arriving, they discovered their orders had been cut drastically by the central office and more conventional orders for textbooks had been substituted. Troy tried to persuade the district to let the Annehurst teachers buy their own materials with the money being spent on unwanted textbooks, but he was unsuccessful. The district office felt chaos would result if every school could order what it wanted.

The district, meanwhile, continued to send Annehurst "thirty of everything." Annehurst would keep twelve copies as resources and send the rest back. Teachers were determined not to become dependent upon textbooks. Still, too few materials existed for the kind of programing they were attempting, so they began an all-out effort to make their own. The PTA supplemented that effort by buying discarded books for "a buck a bundle" at book sales run by the Columbus Public Library.

Asked years later about that period, the teachers reported being angry that the kind of support they needed was not forthcoming from the district. The central office was vaguely affirming, but it did not understand the demands of an individualized program enough to provide the teachers with what they needed.

The Annehurst teachers' sense of not being understood was reinforced when the superintendent came to visit. The "gorgeous buzz" of children and teachers working intensely in the clusters was

particularly apparent that day, and teachers remember being excited. They were sure he would love it as much as they did. Yet all the superintendent commented upon was a stain on the hall ceiling. The disappointment among teachers was unsettling.

Despite the discomfort caused by not being understood, this circumstance prompted an important realization by the school's staff: they would have to rely upon themselves. They were the ones who understood what they were trying to accomplish, and they would have to take responsibility for their own needs. Ideas began quietly percolating about alternative sources of funds for materials.

The staff groped around for a recognizable label to pin onto their organization so that they could more easily explain it to parents and other teachers. Their only real organization was that which had emerged from the school's architecture. Each group of teachers with classes in the same cluster formed a small group to work out programs cooperatively. Each cluster group elected a leader for one year, and then those leaders acted as liaisons between Troy and their cluster. The arrangement was functional for Troy. He could call together team leaders and find out what was happening in much less time than with a large staff meeting.

Surely people somewhere must have figured out a more sophisticated system congruent with the teachers' vision of Annehurst. Somewhere else, people must be experimenting with the same kind of ideas they were. If they could just find something close in style, they might be able to tap into professional thinking and work already accomplished, and would not always have to figure out everything for themselves.

The staff explored British infant schools with educators from the local college who were enthusiastic after a trip to England. They also traveled around looking at informal classrooms, but rejected this approach as too radical in a conservative community like Annehurst Village. They studied Individually Guided Education and the Instructional Materials System, but both seemed to be organized from the top down. Three in-service sessions a week became common as they learned about "continuous progress," "individually guided" education, and interaction analysis.

The whole staff shopped around for ideas. Troy contacted resource people he knew and invited them to attend after-school sessions. Soon "experts" began phoning Annehurst, once it became known that the staff was looking for ideas. At a certain point, speakers were booked a year and a half ahead. A large informal

network of people concerned about Annehurst began to form around the school.

Despite all the searching for an organizational framework to identify with, no system already set up seemed to fit Annehurst exactly. Finally the staff decided they would have to work out their own framework; they settled down to deciding who they really were from the inside out. They agreed that "individualizing the program" in "an open-space school" would guide their efforts, because even "open concept" had seemed to threaten parents who did not know what the term meant.

Meanwhile, in the community, Annehurst was earning a reputation. Parents generally liked what was happening, even if they did not always understand it. They were invited to see the school in operation and to offer their services as volunteers. Troy believed that a policy in which parents were encouraged to visit the school any time they chose was the only one possible in an open school, and that ultimately it would result in positive feelings in the community.

Many parents did become volunteers and began to form a base of community support for the school. At the same time, however, some individuals and small groups of parents were vehemently opposed to the idea of an open school. They could not imagine why an educational situation so different from the one they had experienced should be necessary for their children. How could they be sure the basics were being learned in a school where children were always walking around or sitting on the floor instead of working systematically with textbooks?

School had hardly opened, however, before one parent became determined to have the principal and several teachers dismissed. This bitter reaction was a shock to teachers who were used to having parents enthusiastically request a child's placement in their class.

The concerns of a displeased minority came to have a disproportionate impact upon the morale of the teachers. The Annehurst undertaking was so demanding physically and psychically that any actions opposing the school's orientation hurt the staff. Why could parents not see their children were happy, excited about learning, and assuming responsibility for themselves and their work? How could they see 180 children in a cluster working so well and think it was terrible?

Teachers began to wonder whether receiving so many complaints was too high a price to pay for the open door policy. In other

schools where they had taught, parents would have had more to complain about, teachers thought, but they had known a lot less about what was happening.

Meanwhile, relationships with the local educational community were deteriorating. The more attention Annehurst received from outside educational experts, the more it was resented by teachers and principals at other schools in the district.

"If I hear 'Annehurst' one more time, I'm going to scream!" became a common sentiment. Teachers in surrounding schools, who felt they had been doing a reasonably good job all along, resented Annehurst School being constantly thrown up to them as a model and challenge.

The Annehurst staff was determined not to succumb to pressures to conform. On the other hand, they began action to keep their operation from becoming too galling to the rest of the district.

Annehurst teachers tried to maintain a low profile at district meetings as soon as they recognized the antagonism their ideas were generating. They had thought other teachers would want to know about exciting options, but the other teachers saw them as smug and aggressive.

They tried to share their "expert" resources by inviting in other teachers to meetings and workshops, but few came. Workshop speakers were warned against referring to Annehurst's program, but sometimes speakers forgot or ignored the injunction. Guests became angry and hosts were embarrassed.

In later years, when materials began to accumulate, Annehurst sent out a list of all its resources to other schools, inviting teachers to come out to the school and borrow materials they needed. When only a few teachers in the whole district responded, Annehurst teachers wondered whether they were being perceived as flaunting their wealth.

Newspaper articles and printed remarks by school officials seemed to counteract all the attempts the Annehurst staff made to placate their colleagues. The superintendent was quoted in the press as saying that open schools were "the way to go"—that Annehurst had proved that; moreover, that all the better teachers were going into that kind of teaching. Annehurst teachers were mortified.

Indicative of how high feelings could mount in the district was an incident at a district in-service workshop which about 100 district teachers were attending. The speaker stated that open classrooms were not good for learning disabled children, and a great

cheer arose from the crowd of participants—a spontaneous gush of emotion. Annehurst teachers were unnerved by the strength of resentment reflected. They felt that they were working twice as hard as they would in a traditional building. They were not asking for accolades, but what had they done to deserve such resentment? The physical distance between the other schools in Westerville and Annehurst on the outskirts of the town became accentuated as the Annehurst staff felt increasingly at a psychic distance from others in the district.

From the district's central office, the message communicated was somewhat different. In general, the Annehurst staff felt supported. When they heard that the superintendent had said something positive about them at a principals' meeting, they "lived on that for months." But the staff never felt that they were really understood. Nothing malicious was read into the central office's actions toward them. On the other hand, the central office staff seemed blind to what Annehurst needed. The situation was exasperating.

The teachers' lounge at Annehurst provided a haven from the criticism of the outside world. Inside the school, teachers could look around and know they were doing well without being apologetic. They could reaffirm their commitment to the children openly, without sounding preachy to anyone. Staff people experienced an integrity to their life at Annehurst which they found impossible to communicate to teachers in other schools in the district.

So much energy was demanded by the needs of the children in the school that the district's reaction had to be held in abeyance. Individualized programs had to be designed for subject areas other than the math and reading they had started with when the school began. Some of those programs clicked as soon as they were put into operation. Others looked good before they were tried, but once they were made operational, turned out to have unexpected problems and needed to be discarded.

Constant revisions and adaptations were happening. The math program seemed to be working well. (One mother still claims her daughter was admitted to Harvard later because she had been allowed to do algebra in the sixth grade.) The reading program originally undertaken, however, was presenting more and more difficulties, and the decision was made to look for a better one.

Arrangements for science, by contrast, proved to be exciting for both teachers and students. Teachers would prepare only four

large units each year, choosing those areas for themselves where they were most knowledgeable and therefore confident about teaching. All students in the cluster would choose what they would study for any three week period, while being steered away from any specialization. Teachers were enthusiastic about working on the basis of their own strengths and, in the aggregate, the science program was strong.

Other programing efforts were not so successful. The staff tried ability grouping for a time, but found that the slower students suffered, not only academically but socially and emotionally, so the teachers went back to individualization. Departmentalization was also tried, but rejected after teachers felt they were losing touch with the students who had no stable home base. At another point, the staff engaged in behavioral modification for several months, when they felt under pressure to "do something" about "discipline." By the end of the school year, however, they decided the approach did not fit them, and they allowed it to die gracefully over summer vacation.

Whether rejected or incorporated, the experiments proved valuable as experiences in social learning. Each experience left them with a stronger sense of identity against which to make future judgments of fittingness. Even those experiences which did not work left positive residues of selectively chosen elements, like the skill at reinforcing students' positive behaviors which teachers learned through their experience of the rejected "behavior mod."

In retrospect, grappling with the reading program stands out as a focal point for much of the social learning of those early years. The paperback reading program, which the Annehurst teachers had previously decided on, presented many difficulties, especially to new teachers who had little experience teaching reading and who had had little reading training in college. Diagnosis of reading problems was difficult when the only tool was oral reading. Even experienced teachers were dissatisfied, so the staff decided they would have to find a better way.

With the help of the district's reading specialist, the Annehurst staff examined alternatives, and finally selected the Random House criterion-referenced reading program. Its substantial set of objectives looked like a viable base for individualizing the skill component of reading, but the program was new, and objectives were linked to relatively few materials. Besides, those were not the materials available at the school. Teachers would almost have to re-

invent the program themselves. No other school had it in operation in the area, so they would have no model, but it was the most appropriate program they could find.

The enormous task of finding materials and linking them to objectives began. In that process, "Random House" became the medium for conceptualizing and practicing individualization. Staff people suffered through periods of self-doubt as difficulties arose (e.g., volunteers panicked when large groups of children gathered at the learning centers) but managed to deal with these and move on. When a Random House editor visited the school and pronounced their operation the one "most in the spirit of what we had intended," the staff was euphoric.

Several years later, serious problems were to arise with the system erected in those early days, but teachers today emphasize that it was not so much the substance of their Random House effort that was significant. What was important was the process: deciding that they needed to undertake a major work and committing themselves to it, tracking down options for themselves, working through all the problems the choice presented, experimenting with myriad forms of record keeping, and learning how to make individualization work systematically.

Throughout this whole period of Annehurst's beginning, Troy promoted the generation of ideas from inside the school. Even now Troy will say that Mary Cay Wells' ideas about how things should work were the important formative influence; all he did was help her put those ideas into operation.

Troy encouraged teachers to take graduate courses and to bring anything they learned into the operation of the school. Many teachers used course assignments as a way to work on internal concerns, and found that professors appreciated the dimensions of realism they brought to their graduate classes.

As principal, Troy continued to take the lead in utilizing resources from the environment. Not only experts with ideas but parents with time to give were brought into the school. A large volunteer program emerged. Every teacher had several volunteer mothers available each week, helping outside the classroom correcting papers and inside working with individual children.

Troy seemed to be learning along with the teachers. Rather than having a preconceived idea of where the school should go, he would work with the staff in selecting what made sense out of the whole universe of available options. The staff operated from the

same basic principles from which he did. They wanted their school to be the best they could make it. What might seem to others a vague statement of intent served for them as an anchor for judgments. They would decide what to experiment with and whether their experiments were working, all on the same simple basis: were they getting better at what they wanted to do, coming closer to what they wanted to be?

The coherence and clarity of that commitment left no room for territorial concerns. Teachers could not rise or fall by their own individual efforts. This was clearly a collective enterprise. Materials, ideas, information, and expertise were all shared around the school in a whirl of energy and determination.

From the beginning, the staff had had a sense of how important interpersonal relationships would be. The teachers had decided before Annehurst School even began that they would live, eat, celebrate, cooperate, and share together. Reminiscing later, they said they knew it had to be that way.

Troy carried out his commitment to that idea by working to establish close personal relationships with the teachers. He would spend hours in his office talking with teachers about their personal lives—illness, death, divorce, and marriage. Good relationships with teachers had always been possible in other schools where he has been principal, but at Annehurst closeness was easy. Troy could walk through each "room" in the building several times a day, feeling encouraged by everything new that was happening, and finding ways to compliment teachers on their work. With that kind of communication, trusting relationships developed naturally.

Troy encouraged teachers and they encouraged one another to contribute out of their uniqueness to the community endeavor. Some teachers were expert organizers; others had antennae tuned to community resources. Some had political sense, useful for working with district committees; others' sensitivities were interpersonal and allowed them to help with the rare intrastaff problems.

No matter where a teacher's talents lay, those talents could be utilized and they were needed. Everyone was responsible for the fate of the whole.

Each spring, teachers helped to interview candidates applying for positions. Congeniality was clearly a major criterion. So much depended on whether newcomers believed as the experienced teachers believed, whether they were willing to work to make the vision real. Professional life at Annehurst could be a shock for

anyone unprepared for its demands.

Each autumn, as new teachers became part of the group, the culture of the school surrounded them like a giant amoeba. They were absorbed into the system with hardly a ripple. They were socialized to conform to a set of norms which guided their behavior as strictly as it did that of the first teachers:

> In this school, people work hard at their jobs, but they make them fun for one another. Support is readily available, but staff people respect one another enough not to interfere in what needs to be experienced alone. The development of the children is the ultimate concern, and it is pursued lovingly. To make all this possible, teachers give freely of themselves, and are rewarded by constant and fulfilling successes.

Here and there over the years, teachers were occasionally hired who did not fit what they saw as the "madness" of the school. Annehurst teachers seemed to be obsessed with teaching. They devoted time above and beyond the call of duty. *Who in their right mind would want to be part of that kind of life?* Those teachers would soon leave, usually by their own volition.

No matter what was happening, Troy was in the middle of it. He would station himself in the corner of the lounge within earshot of all conversations. He promoted the idea that what teachers were doing was important, so he needed to be in the lounge to find out what was going on. He knew right away when something had gone wrong, when a teacher was elated about a success, when a problem with a child was beginning, how teachers were communicating with one another, how programs were developing.

Rarely did he need to take an administrator's stand because his preferences were woven into the fabric of things as they materialized. Sometimes Troy would be accused of permissiveness by teachers, but he saw himself as a persuader, working with key people in the school to accomplish what he thought needed shaping. Often he felt it was enough just to raise a question ("Do you think we're doing enough reading aloud?") because teachers would take the hint and carry on themselves from there.

On the few occasions when Troy did make administrator-like

pronouncements, Mary Cay Wells would work behind stage to interpret his actions and soften the blow. Excuses would be made for Troy: "He's the principal; he has to do that." (Privately, Mary Cay appreciated how rarely he used that administrative tactic.) Teachers would help one another feel better, and move on without hard feelings. Mary Cay began to be regarded as a person to consult about problems. She could not only make sense of Troy's actions to teachers when they were having trouble understanding him, but she would interpret teachers' feelings to Troy when he was having trouble understanding them.

Mary Cay began being looked to for moral support when individual teachers needed help. One teacher remembered that "she could always help you with an idea; when you had just a vague sense of things, she could always extend it and help you make it real." Respected in the district for her teaching competency and nicknamed "Superteacher" by the Annehurst teachers, she seemed the natural person to go to with complicated professional problems. At the same time, her skills at human relations made staff people consult her about interpersonal difficulties.

Together with Troy, Mary Cay constituted a moral force promoting the original vision of the school. Even more than Troy, however, Mary Cay concentrated upon the development of the teachers—their growing awareness of themselves and their strengths, and the possibilities for their contribution to the task they had undertaken.

Troy found a half-time substitute so that Mary Cay could plan a summer workshop directed at staff development. Mary Cay, who felt she knew nothing about setting up such an activity for other teachers, traveled around to other schools in the area, asking for ideas from anyone with experience. Meanwhile, she tried to sort through all the abstract ideas of the "vision" they had conceived.

A sense of confidence was gradually emerging out of the staff's experience. Despite this, however, teachers still had their antennae out, just in case some theoretical framework appeared which seemed appropriate for structuring the organization of the school. None of the labels they had encountered had been totally acceptable; neither had the accompanying philosophies and organizational approaches. Already by the second year of operation, the Annehurst staff had a strong sense of who they were—strong enough to know that they were not about to adopt a framework which did not fit them.

Then, during the winter of that second year, one teacher taking a course at Ohio State University became intrigued with a paper distributed in class. Titled "A School for Tomorrow," the paper described the author's idea of an ideal school: one with a clear, humanistic orientation toward the development of individual children, with an integrated system of goals, curriculum, organization, and staff development, and with a commitment to transforming itself over time. It sounded like the type of school the Annehurst staff wanted their school to become.

The paper was soon being circulated and discussed seriously at the school. Teachers saw their vision of what a school should be mirrored in its emphasis upon the fostering of children's intellectual and emotional growth by teachers with a deep understanding of human development. By spring 1972, they had contacted the author, Jack Frymier, a professor of education at Ohio State University, and invited him out to the school to meet with them.

Jack Frymier remembers that first encounter with Annehurst teachers as amicable and lively, although he was flabbergasted that they had nearly memorized his paper. Troy remembers Jack being somewhat uncomfortable with so enthusiastic a reception from people he did not even know. In either case, Jack came away convinced that Annehurst was an exciting place with a dedicated staff and exceptional leadership.

"A School for Tomorrow" was a paper originally presented at a convention of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and had grown by this time into a first draft manuscript of what was to become a book. Written primarily by Jack Frymier and his colleagues, it was a collection of essays on curriculum, instruction, evaluation, organization, staff development, and school climate. In autumn 1972, the Annehurst staff began to study and critique each mimeographed chapter of the book.

The excitement of being consulted professionally by an author about a forthcoming book on schooling was magnified by the teachers' enthusiastic identification with the substance it contained. *A School for Tomorrow* expressed so much of what they had worked toward making real at Annehurst:

> Students will be creators, synthesizers, analyzers, consumers, users and pattern builders of knowledge. They will become increasingly aware of the dimensions and structure of their own knowledge and will

> recognize the source of support for their own beliefs and conclusions.
>
> They will be more open to experience, more accepting of themselves, more confident, and more accepting of others.
>
> Teachers will be more patient; more skilled at listening and observing; and more flexible in their use of materials, teaching strategies, and assessment tools.
>
> They will spend less time restricting, controlling and directing students, and more time thinking, watching, pondering, conjecturing, and reflecting on what students do. . . .
>
> Paying attention to the individual learner, hearing him, and thinking about him will be in evidence everywhere. Inducements, threats, reprimands, and rewards will not be apparent.[1]

Troy began talking with Jack Frymier about the possibility of a formal working relationship between Annehurst and the "School for Tomorrow" writing team. By late fall 1972, they had negotiated an agreement which involved Jack and the curriculum and foundations department in the College of Education at The Ohio State University with the Westerville City Schools.

Westerville agreed to pay the university $13,500 for each year. In return, professors would work with the Annehurst staff to implement the ideas in *A School for Tomorrow*. Funds were not to go to the professors themselves, however, but for the purchase of materials and for the support of graduate students assisting with the project.

This arrangement was deliberately chosen. The university people wanted a commitment of money from the school system, believing that the Westerville staff would take more seriously efforts in which the community had invested local educational funds. At the same time, both professors and Annehurst staff knew that the university faculty would not themselves be receiving that money. Professors recognized from the beginning that their only way to benefit personally would be through their learning with the teachers,

---

[1]Jack R. Frymier, *A School for Tomorrow* (Berkeley, Ca.: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1973), pp. 277-78.

and therefore they were encouraged to work more reflectively than they might have under a more conventional arrangement.

By this same set of circumstances, Annehurst teachers were put into a position where they could hardly discount what the professors would say, since they could not ascribe their involvement in the school to anything except sincere interest. Both parties, therefore, approached the agreement with more than a modicum of intentionality.

Troy Mills and Jack Frymier both saw this agreement as an attempt to establish a clearly symbiotic relationship—one in which all parties would presume that they knew about different dimensions of school life and that they had different experiences and ways of working, but not presume that one group knew more than the other. In this way they felt neither party would exploit the other nor feel exploited themselves.

Some of the professors had ideas about curriculum and instruction that they wanted to experiment with in a real school setting, but they were determined to be sensitive to the reality of the school in which they found themselves. This determination corresponded to a similar attitude on the part of the Annehurst staff not to be used as guinea pigs. However flattering it was to have university people interested in them, they were not going to lose their identity in a flood of innovations from the outside.

Meanwhile, other possibilities for creating the kind of school they wanted were presenting themselves to the Annehurst staff. During a PTA meeting when they had told parents about new developments in the school, one parent suggested seeking federal funds to put more of their ideas into operation. The parent had useful skills and inside knowledge about how to obtain grants. He offered his help. A new era in the school's history was about to begin.

3

Coming of Age

Troy formed a team with the cluster leaders—Mary Cay Wells, Mary Slane, and Mary Bowers—to work on a preliminary proposal with the parent who was experienced in securing outside funds. They tried to involve other district schools in this effort, but other principals were not interested. They wanted no part of the "dog and pony show" that Annehurst represented.

After reviewing the preliminary proposal, the state Title III officer encouraged Annehurst to submit an expanded version, so teachers formed small groups to work out what they would really like included in the proposal. How could they formulate what they understood in a way that the Title III office could understand? How could they present all that they wanted to do, when so much of that depended upon an organic development that was hard to predict? How could they visualize so far in advance what abstract ideas should look like in operation?

As hectic as teacher life at Annehurst had been, its pace quickened with the press of planning meetings. District teachers joked that high schools and Annehurst were on "long schedule" (elementary schools were supposed to be on "short schedule"). Mary Cay was released from teaching duties to work on the proposal full time. Jack Frymier offered the school the help of one of his graduate students who had experience writing proposals. During spring vacation of 1973, the proposal for a project titled "A School for Tomorrow" was finally finished and then submitted with high hopes to the Title III office.

The mounting intensity of that spring, the third year of the school's operation, gave a hint of the whirl of activity that was to come in the next three years. While the excitement of writing a proposal infected the staff, the linkage between Ohio State and Annehurst was becoming visible.

Professors were meeting after school with teachers, planning

learning experiences for which teachers could get graduate credit. Curriculum, instruction, evaluation, and staff development became themes around which to synthesize experience and intentions.

Then, almost at the end of the school year, came the news that the Title III project would be funded. Staff people were jubilant: four full time staff people and $300,000 to do what they thought needed doing! Principals at other schools suddenly wondered how wise they had been to resist involvement. Some asked Troy if they could still be involved, but the specifications of the grant made such a change impossible. This made some principals angry.

The project was to go into effect with a three week summer workshop designed to draw teachers into the intensive period of staff development to come. Jubilation soon became mixed with trepidation as teachers worried whether they had initiated more than they could manage. How could they ever get ready in time?

The staff shifted gears for an all-out mobilization. Planning meetings were scheduled every night after school. Small groups, huddled together in the clusters, talked excitedly about possibilities and groaned over the work entailed. Any teacher wandering around looking for a quiet companion to correct papers with was drawn into the closest meeting. Some teachers began taking shelter, gathering up school work to take home rather than being drowned in more involvement than they could bear. Spouses began complaining that school was consuming teachers' lives. Many teachers thought the intensity of activity was "a little crazy," but no one was admitting this feeling openly.

The project's purpose, according to the preliminary proposal, had been to organize a "school for tomorrow." To support this goal, staff people would devise a six-component model and three retrieval systems. The revised version more modestly proposed developing a *model* for a school for tomorrow, with a single retrieval system, at that point called ASPIRES: Annehurst Student Programmed Information Retrieval System.

Expected outcomes were stated as improved teacher competencies presumed necessary for the humanistic, individualized education intended for Annehurst students: problem solving skills, awareness of nonverbal communication, skill in observation and analysis of teaching, as well as in the devising of objectives and personalized techniques. The whole project was built upon a stated commitment to the individual student's process of becoming a "rationally autonomous individual."

The staff for this project would involve four professional persons in the positions of director, assistant director/evaluator, staff development facilitator, and media specialist. For the first year, Troy would serve as project director. In addition, the project called for nonprofessional personnel: a community resource coordinator, a volunteer coordinator, and a project secretary.

The list of activities in the first year's "detailed timeline" was lengthy. The initial three week workshop would focus on selection of professional profile forms, interaction analysis techniques, and professional input techniques, as well as on determination of criteria for the curriculum pieces of the retrieval system.

September would be devoted to interaction analysis, October to the initial development of student self-evaluation instruments. November would revolve around utilization of September's work for improving teaching, December around the categorization of curriculum pieces for ASPIRES. By then, the file of community resources should contain at least fifty items.

In January, students would begin to use their self-evaluation instruments and on-site and off-site learning experiences. February would center on teacher behavior changes in reference to professional profiles, and March on the design and implementation of instructional strategies. Five thousand curriculum pieces were to be coded for ASPIRES by that time so that April could be a trial-run month for the system.

The last few weeks of the academic year were planned to accomplish a whole list of objectives: evaluation of the ASPIRES trial run, detailed planning for the 1974 summer workshop, staff determination of changes on the professional profile, and completion of the initial bank of student self-evaluation instruments and the file of 100 community resources.

Staff people most closely involved with project plans had to caution one another against becoming overwhelmed by the ambitiousness of the project undertaking, and instead to apply themselves to the exigencies of the moment. Of these there were many.

Teachers, meanwhile, had to be concerned with the demands of teaching and learning, and found continuing satisfaction in their work with the children. The teachers persisted in concentrating on student-centered learning, and the children gave evidence that they felt comfortable to experience and make mistakes as they learned. Graduate students from Ohio State began to be part of the Annehurst scene as they collected data about this intriguing social system.

Teachers who joined the staff voiced their amazement over how well kids could learn to operate independently, and how involved they could get with school work. Some children had to be sent home at the end of the day or they would talk endlessly with teachers about what they were learning. One third grader named the phenomenon "getting hooked on something," when he realized he had lost all track of time while working on a reading assignment.

Another third grader wrote to the school nurse after an especially successful presentation she had done with a giant model of a human ear. The student said the nurse's speech was "worth it," even though she had taken up the whole science period. Because the nurse knew how the students loved science, she could appreciate the compliment.

Students seemed to be developing attitudes toward work that, to the teachers, were gratifying and funny. Toward the end of the week, teachers would have trouble getting them to work with their friends on projects like the seven-foot Easter Bunny float in the commons area. By Thursday, students would be too concerned with fulfilling the week's work contract to be tempted by such frivolity.

The ideas of the children about their own experiences were respected and allowed to affect day-to-day operations. Once, a fourth grade girl expressed frustration at always having to stop what she was involved in to deal with another subject. When other students said they felt the same way, the idea of "open time" was born—a long period in the day when children had control over use of their own time. Because of the school's open space arrangement, the idea spread from one class to the whole cluster in a matter of days, as students and teachers quickly realized what a good solution it was to a problem they were all sensing.

In a lower cluster, the "move up a little closer" procedure started when some students told a teacher they needed to hear more about what she had just explained to the whole class. Together, students and teacher decided that those who understood immediately would leave the whole group gathered on the floor around the teacher, and go to work at their own desks. Others who realized that they did not understand a concept would move closer to the teacher. Very small children soon learned to make responsible decisions about when they should leave. And they had found a way, by themselves, to avoid being permanently grouped and labeled.

Children worked together and helped one another almost in the style of the teachers. No one could quite figure out which group

affected the other more. Evaluative comments were offered and were received as positive suggestions rather than as negative criticisms. The principal and visitors were welcomed in the classrooms rather than regarded as intruders. Teachers were happy and open about what they were doing. Children had a "give me more" attitude and were likely to capture any adult in sight to help them solve problems.

A visiting media specialist from the state department of education was unobtrusively checking through the library's card catalog one day when he was accosted by a student who wanted help finding material on grasshoppers. The consultant spent twenty minutes searching with him, and later told Troy that was the first time he had been consulted by a student. He thought it was great!

Teachers could watch students discovering their own potential for learning and developing their own creativity. Seeing themselves as facilitators in a process they so deeply affirmed helped teachers discover their own worth in their interaction with the students.

Was this teacher-student process really so different from what happens in many schools? If it was, its distinctiveness lay in how widespread the experience was inside the school. It was not just a few exceptionally talented teachers who were caught up in this developmental dynamic. Nor was it only the brightest children. This was the way of life of the school, and everyone was part of it.

Standardized test scores reflected one dimension of this communality. Until very recently, Annehurst students did not score much higher on the average than students in other district schools. From the beginning, however, the range of student achievement at Annehurst was narrower than the rest of the district. Very few Annehurst students ranked below expected grade level on achievement tests. The shortening of the lower tail on the graphed curve reflected, to the staff, their commitment to the learning of individual children. On the other hand, the resistance among teachers to putting much stock at all in test scores reflected their sense that the intellectual achievement of kids was only a single dimension of their educational experience.

Meanwhile, the Ohio State professors began to be socialized by the force of the Annehurst culture. Jack Frymier remembers when he drove out to the school one day for a discussion of plans and goals for the university involvement. He had expected to be ushered into an office for a formal discussion. Instead, he was

escorted into the lounge, offered a cup of coffee, and seated near teachers talking casually about what was happening in school.

Jack left that day without having the discussion he had planned, but with an invitation to the Christmas party and a sense of deep-seated goals pervading daily life. He felt comfortable and accepted, and somehow no longer anxious at all about objectives. He wondered what it was that made Annehurst so different from other schools.

The other professors too were affected by Annehurst. The university people felt valued by the staff the minute they walked into the school. Teachers' enthusiasm enlivened interactions. Professors were welcomed into the Annehurst family.

The four professors most involved worked individually or in pairs with the teachers, but they were perceived as a collegial team. Those four strong individuals found themselves growing to fit the teachers' image of them and were sustained by that perception. Their working with the Annehurst staff cemented relationships among the professors, who could then operate from a stronger base to establish a real partnership with the school staff.

During the summer of 1973, the four professors conducted a three-week workshop at the Annehurst School. The professors, who had promised to help, ran sessions at Annehurst just as their own full summer quarter at the university was ending. Some of them remembered how tired they were when they began that workshop—how doubtful they were that a significant staff development effort could work in such a short time and in the August heat.

Only one teacher missed any of the workshop days—and that only because she was on her honeymoon. (She remembers that her cluster teammates were uncertain whether a honeymoon constituted a sufficient reason for her absence. The press for conformity was, in some ways, very high.) And the professors had fun interacting with teachers who "ate them up."

The professors worked for free under the agreement with the Westerville Board of Education, and Title III funds paid teacher stipends. Because the workshop was at the end of their busiest time of the year, the OSU people might have been tempted to refuse involvement. However, they were not being offered a monetary incentive, which might have given them the right to decline. Besides, they had promised to help. The strange, upside-down incentive system seemed to be working.

By the time school opened in the fall of 1973, teachers had

already had a taste of project activities. More complicated forms were to follow as the social system imagined for the Title III grant began to materialize, embedded in a matrix of questions.

How should project staff people operate? Mary Cay Wells, Cathy Hart, and Dave Stanley, all previously part of the teaching staff, had been "promoted" to project status. A person from the state department of education, Don Dyck, joined the project staff. How did other teachers feel about not being promoted? Would teachers feel that ideas were being forced upon them? Would the project have its own office? Would project staff be accepted just as they had been when they were teachers?

How should the project staff work now with the parent who had helped initiate the project? He had not become a formal project member, as had once been envisioned, but he was acting as a paid consultant and had a personal stake in how the project developed. His vision of the project's direction was clear, but did it correspond to that of the other project people?

Did teachers really need staff development functions performed by Mary Cay, when they were already learning so much through their experience with the OSU professors? How could Don Dyck act as evaluator until something emerged that he could evaluate? Where were teachers going to find the time to be involved in activities the project people would dream up, when their lives were already so busy?

As fall unfolded, some of these questions resolved themselves. Others just hung in the air, part of the tolerated ambiguity. New problems arose each time a new activity was launched.

Plans made with the university people before the project had been funded came in handy now, because they could be interwoven with project activities. However complex the system of inputs was, its thrust was coherent: Annehurst wanted to improve its operations by focusing on teacher behavior, while holding tightly to its commitment to the development of children. To this end, the OSU involvement would provide stimulation, and the agreement between the university and the Westerville schools would provide the financial support for graduate students doing linkage and back-up work. From another direction, the Title III project would provide salaries for full time staff people engaged in this development effort, as well as equipment and stipends for teachers working outside regular teaching hours.

The memory of what happened during the three years of the

project is for many teachers today like a colorful blur of meetings and learning experiences. Formal interaction with the OSU people had begun several months earlier, but these activities were extended to full force at the same moment that a new innovation-oriented project staff team was created by federal funding.

Staff people were open to professors' ideas, but they were hesitant to express disagreements forcefully, at least at first. Professors of education, they thought, probably knew a great deal more than they did about education. On the other hand, those professors obviously wanted to know the teachers' opinions about the worth of ideas, and that was affirming.

As interactions continued, teachers came to have more respect for their own experience-based understanding, and risked openly criticizing professor-initiated ideas. At that point, those ideas that were being made operational began to have real meaning for the teachers, because they knew the ideas were grounded in their teaching-learning reality.

Professors were struck by how differently the Annehurst teachers related to ideas. Instead of putting innovations on trial, the teachers would "milk them for all they were worth"—but only after they had decided something was worth trying. Teachers became deeply interested in conceptualizing what they already knew intuitively.

Like the ideas the Annehurst people had experimented with themselves, the ideas worked out collaboratively with the OSU people suffered a variety of fates. Some worked extremely well. Some did not work at all.

One group of teachers began working with Jack Frymier on a way to make instructional materials more available and relevant to their individualized program. Another group worked with Professor Kelly Duncan, looking for methods of evaluation appropriate in an open school. Professor Charles Galloway worked with teachers individually, encouraging them in their strengths and helping them in their relationships with the children.

Professor Jack Hough spent a full academic quarter at the school, playing the part of a fifth grade student, and taking extensive field notes and using multiple coding as he gathered participant observation data. By this time, students as well as teachers were so used to visitors in the school that Jack had no trouble being adopted as a "big kid" by the fifth grade. When he fumbled around for the first few days, he was taken in hand by members of the class who

told him not to worry: "in this school they help you if you don't know what you're doing."

Various studies were suggested by the OSU people, but only those the Annehurst people felt would be of benefit to them were carried out. The right to decide what went on in the school clearly rested with the Annehurst staff. Teachers, for example, decided to cooperate in a study of teaching behaviors and a refinement of a coding system to observe teaching because they themselves wanted to know more about their own teaching behavior.

In the aggregate, symbiosis became apparent. Neither the professors nor the school staff could claim that they were giving without receiving. The professors were helped by Annehurst at least as much as they were helping the school. They were providing services and information much less than they were working with teachers, and they were modifying their own attitudes and skills in the process. Caught in the reality of "teaching school" day after day, they regained a sense of school activities, pressures, and humor which they had not had since their own early days of teaching in public schools. Teachers, on the other hand, began to gain a sense of problem solving approaches to difficult problem areas, new insights about their own experience, and a broadened concern for education in all its complexity. Both parties were experiencing, learning, and experimenting with new ideas. However, this cooperative arrangement was not without its problems, as particular elements experienced growing pains.

Jack Frymier had come with a commitment to individualization and an idea that curriculum materials should be organized to facilitate individualized instruction. The teachers he worked with were committed to individualization, just as he was, and were glad for the prospect of working out an individually-oriented materials retrieval system, but they were determined not to acquiesce to anything impractical.

Interactions in the group working on curriculum materials became heated interpersonally. As work went on, staff people began referring to Jack as "Papa Bear." They felt he was being unreasonable and had forgotten his promise to be sensitive to their particular needs. He wanted to categorize materials in reference to the individual characteristics of children. Teachers doubted that such conceptual complexity would even be practical, and wanted to categorize materials according to subject matter. Arguments went on for hours in after-school meetings.

Refinement of Jack Hough's observational system (OSIA) also encountered problems. Teachers wanted to receive feedback on their teaching performance, and so were willing to be observed, videotaped, and coded, even though that was sometimes a grueling experience for both teachers and children. Coding turned out to be too time consuming for the personnel available, so mothers were trained to observe and categorize teacher behavior. But the system they were using emphasized verbal behavior. In Annehurst's open space, many important interactions happened too quietly for observers to hear—for example, when a teacher bent over a child to talk about a problem. Teachers also felt that parents sometimes made inaccurate inferences about their behavior (even though this was a low inference system) and that data would therefore be skewed.

Strange coding configurations sometimes emerged from this process, and some teachers had to be convinced they were not as brutal as the coding might indicate. On the other hand, teachers did feel that they benefitted from seeing themselves on tape, and several immediately went on reducing diets. Once they felt comfortable enough to stop performing for the camera, they were intrigued by seeing themselves from the perspective of their students. The whole adventure raised their awareness and taught them to set goals for their own teaching, even though while it was happening, they were frustrated at not meeting more of the goals they had set for themselves.

Other experiences appeared to be unqualified successes. A weekend retreat with Kelly Duncan at one teacher's home met a perceived need for quiet reflection on what was personally fulfilling for teachers in their Annehurst experience.

Discussions with Charles Galloway about nonverbal communication broadened out into questions of relationship and interaction between children and teachers. Professors encouraged teachers to pursue the way of relating to the children that they had worked out reflectively over the years.

The search for grading alternatives, and eventually the generation of various forms for reporting on students' development to their parents, communicated to parents the message that Annehurst was a different kind of school than they had known before. Most parents approved of the difference in criteria operative at Annehurst. Some parents, however, were not so happy, and wondered whether they "were still having school there."

The controversy that had raged over a curriculum materials

retrieval system began to settle down as parties involved gradually saw the validity of the other party's view. (Teachers think Jack Frymier mellowed; he thinks they did.) Having started with little more than a common commitment to individualization and a general agreement on the curriculum ideas expressed in *A School for Tomorrow*, the group struggling with curriculum had taken a long time to get hold of their problem. Without a prior plan of any sort, they had had to struggle through mountains of definitional nuance and intricate detail of organization. Gradually, however, a completely new basis for classifying curriculum was evolving, and the whole staff was drawn into the excitement of what they considered a revolutionary approach.

Woven though this dense set of activities with the OSU professors was another set of activities carried on by project people and teachers on their own. The focus of each month's activities listed in the project proposal acted only as a thematic touchstone for an array of staff development efforts.

Students got to tell teachers what they thought should be happening in a survey with a single sentence stub: "I wish. . . ." Parents, meanwhile were systematically surveyed about their attitudes toward the school. With the help of Professor Donald Cruickshank from Ohio State, teachers began keeping logs of their teaching activities and difficulties. They started compiling lists of critical incidents, and these were eventually drawn together into the "Annehurst-Pointview Teacher Problem Checklist." This checklist they then used as a basis for individualizing teaching behavior objectives.

Teachers, students, and parent coders all took part in a survey of school climate. They discovered that teacher and student interpretations of classroom happenings tended to correspond more closely than either did with those of the parents who acted as observers.

Some teachers began using mini-questionnaires with their students. Even the youngest children could feed back useful yes-no data to a teacher about whether "my teacher takes time to listen to me," or whether "I can go to my teacher with a problem." Teachers could plot responses, make indicated changes in their own behavior, and then use their data as a baseline against which to judge follow-up responses to the same question later.

Mary Cay Wells spent time in classrooms observing when teachers requested help with problems, either vague or specified.

Sometimes she would do an activity flow: at ten minute intervals writing down where everyone was in the room and what they were doing. Teachers could gain a better sense of who was goofing off too much (politely referred to as "engaging in excess random activity"), or they could get a clearer picture of the behavior of children they were concerned about but to whom they could not devote as much attention as they would have liked.

Perhaps the most intensive of all the teacher development activities was the developmental profile. As staff developer, Mary Cay would give a comprehensive interview to teachers who wanted to take it. The data furnished would be organized according to recurrent themes and then fed back to the teachers with no negative evaluation. Teachers would usually end up inspired and happy—and with new insights about themselves as teachers—after being told for an hour or two what was right with them.

Project people published an in-house newsletter which featured information on new teacher reference books, new media materials, parent responses to teacher conferences, and objectives for the next week's staff development workshop. Interspersed were reports on in-school activities: student observers, career awareness week, arts week, and bake sales. Reflections of nonacademic sharing so characteristic of the school were sprinkled liberally through all this: recipes, breakfast celebrations, a new crock pot for the lounge, a community effort to quit smoking, happy hours, the birth of twin nephews, the election of a student teacher as Otterbein homecoming queen.

Bit by bit, all these activities—those centered around the OSU people and those undertaken by the project staff—seemed to contribute to the growth of a rich, responsive environment for learning. And students were not blind to the purpose of all this activity.

In reference to a classroom climate inventory being administered in a third grade classroom, one little girl told a graduate student, "I think this is an excellent way for a teacher to improve himself—just excellent."

In the process of asking students about their experience, teachers sometimes received better information than they had expected. When asked the survey question, "Does your teacher pay more attention to some kids?," a second grader answered, "No. She shares her love with all of us."

Project people began referring to Annehurst as a "growing place," which is how children, teachers, and the project staff seemed

to be experiencing it. The project staff always felt accepted by the teachers, despite all the demands made on their limited time. They felt less secure, however, in relation to the project proposal serving as the basis of their work, and found they had to revise it continually in the direction of realism. Some technically correct objectives turned out to be "operationally rotten," and teachers did not hesitate to tell project staff people what they thought of some aspects of the project.

The first year of the project was a strange mixture of success and difficulty. Many of the difficulties were reflected in the data gathered by two teachers who conducted an undercover study of innovations in process that year.

These two teachers were taking a graduate course in change strategies at the time, and wanted to understand better how Annehurst teachers responded to attempts to change their behavior. They acted as participant observers in the school, recording conversations which referred to innovations or to the process of their introduction.

When the study was finally made public, the teachers were criticized by some of their colleagues for refusing to observe an Annehurst norm of openness. However, their assessment of the situation and the questions they raised illuminate the complexity of that year's undertaking:

- Time available for working out new projects is constantly decreasing. Some teachers feel that too many good ideas are suggested with too little attention paid to making their operationalization possible.
- The lack of a systematic framework for understanding what looks like a three-ring circus is debilitating for many teachers. Purposes and expectations are often unclear or conflicting.
- Feelings toward the OSU professors and the ideas which revolve around them range from exuberance to down-right antagonism. Professors are sometimes regarded as charismatic, sometimes as ill-prepared, insensitive, and stubborn.
- Is too much being attempted in too little time? Is frustration among teachers linked to inadequate internalization of innovation before a demand for a

new change is made? Are teachers being "committed" to death?

- Are consultants really being helpful to the school, or are teachers jumping on and off bandwagons simply on the basis of personality?
- Is Troy's administrative style appropriate to a time of such intense stimulation and change? Don't all teachers need to be involved in everything if no one but the corporate staff can solve problems?
- How realistic is this demand on time and patience? How can teachers really be autonomous professionals when so much coordinated problem solving is needed?

Besides the problems associated with innovation efforts coming from so many directions, the school's internal developmental dynamic provided another dimension of concern. Problems with the reading curriculum, for example, had been growing for years. Perhaps because of the added pressure of the "School for Tomorrow" project, it came to a head.

Teachers who worked with the older children complained about the depersonalization of teaching reading (because students worked on their own so much), about the vast amounts of paperwork involved, and about the frequency of misplaced students or folders. (One was almost as bad as the other.) The personal, sustained effort demanded of teachers seemed disproportionate to the reading program's advantages.

By February 1974, Mary Cay could see trouble brewing, so she decided to try to salvage the program. Troy agreed that she should try. The more she talked with teachers, however, the more Mary Cay sympathized with them. Teachers expressed to her their increasing frustration over Troy's expectation that they should carry on under impossible conditions. Troy, however, was firm: they had all gone through so many years of problems adapting their reading program and obtaining materials for it, they could not throw it out because teachers were unhappy.

Mary Cay knew, however, that some teachers were already passively resisting. More than half the "users" were not even using the program. Gradually she worked out with them a simplified version of the Random House program as a compromise proposal. She

asked for help from the district's reading consultant, who met with Troy and Mary Cay. Finally, all parties agreed on a modified version, but teachers did not "own" the solution because they felt it was being imposed.

All involved remember the incident as uncharacteristic of the ways things usually happened at the school. Some use it to show how the "crazy intensity" of that period affected the way people were able to relate to one another.

That people were under pressure was apparent. Ambiguities and personal idiosyncrasies which were usually gracefully tolerated became the source of interpersonal problems. Teachers criticized the OSU professors to Troy, but when he took no action, they criticized him. The principal who had always enjoyed riding herd in a complex activity system did not seem to be enjoying himself.

Despite these difficulties, the project's social reality had stabilized, at least to some degree, by the end of that first project year. Teachers were becoming more accustomed to the intense pace of innovation and more open about their acceptance and rejection. Mary Cay, who had spent much of the year deferring to the judgment of a graduate student assistant with a wealth of experience in staff development, realized by the end of the year that she herself had the skill to work with the staff on her own terms. Other project staff members were achieving a comparable sense of what they were about.

The existence of the project, however complex, was lending new legitimacy to the decision for staff direction which had been inherent in Annehurst's make-up since its inception. That moment in its history seemed a coming of age for the school.

On the other hand, real problems had become apparent. Troy had become alienated from other district principals, who referred to Annehurst as "the Golden Ghetto": the newest building in the district, situated in the wealthiest neighborhood, and with a $300,000 federal grant. If Annehurst's test scores were the highest in the district, it was easy to explain them away: "Well, give *me* a grant like that one. . . ." The other principals were critical and chagrined.

Internally, a major source of tension that year had been the relationship between the project staff and the parent who helped initiate it. Although he had helped immensely in the inital stages of proposal writing and funding and had served as consultant during the first year, the project's relationship with him became increasingly

strained. He pushed a vision for the school which troubled others: he pressed a technological approach to teacher development—an emphasis upon specified teacher competencies—when what others perceived as emerging from the Annehurst experience was a much more organic orientation to professional and personal growth. Ultimately, it was realized that what had once been a helpful relationship had become stressful, and regretfully the ties were severed.

The attitude of the other school principals and the pushing of the local Title III grant expert had an important effect. Resisting these challenges to their right of self-determination drew the Annehurst staff together, even though both presented difficult, emotion-laden problems. Staff people gave needed pep talks to one another about being masters of their own destiny.

A capstone to all the emotional intensity of that first year was the "beating" the project staff received from the Title III office when evaluation time arrived. Part of the difficulty was the style of the evaluation report itself. In harmony with the style of the Annehurst project, the report was descriptive, dealing with all the activities happening at the school. What the state office was looking for, however, was an input-output model showing the percentage of achieved goals.

By this time, too, it was clear that the Annehurst project differed radically in philosophy from the type the Title III office wanted to support. Annehurst seemed too committed to process rather than to specific products, too concerned with the creation of a "climate" for learning and the development of an ambiguous "rational autonomous individual."

The Annehurst project staff began to receive clear messages that they were expected to produce materials that could be disseminated, not branch off into other areas they had planned to explore. They started wondering whether the Annehurst project had been funded in the first place because there had been few competing proposals.

Criticism of the inadequacy of the evaluation report led to objections about project goals, even though these had been clearly specified in the funded proposal. Dissatisfaction at the Title III office ran high, and project staff believed that the possibility of cutting off all funding was real. The new Westerville superintendent, who had accompanied the project staff to the evaluation hearing, pointed out that the project had been funded for a three year period. Title III decision makers finally backed down, but cut funding from the

$120,000 requested for the second year to $100,000.

A shaken project staff returned to the school where teachers were extremely supportive. A period of regrouping ensued, and the decision was made to shift the directorship from Troy, who could then concentrate on being principal, to Don Dyck, who would also continue as evaluator.

Contributing to the emotional impact of the encounter with the Title III office was the experience they had just survived with the Westerville school system—trying to persuade the district to extend its contract with Ohio State University, even though funding had only been requested originally for a single year. Why should the district contribute local educational funds to a school which already had a huge federal grant? Where was the evidence of dissemination to other schools in the district of all the innovations at Annehurst?

It had been a struggle trying to convince school district officials that their funds were supporting a different effort than Title III funds were. The work of conceptualizing, exploring, and extending on the basis of theory—all this rested upon support from the district. Graduate students were needed to act as liaisons with the OSU professors and to furnish support services. Students could do the leg work, run off dittos, prepare meetings, and take on library research, but graduate students could not be supported by Title III funds. Federal funds were for implementing ideas, for paying stipends to workshop participants, buying equipment, and paying the salaries of staff people.

Reluctantly, the district eventually agreed to continue funding, stipulating that more attention be paid to dissemination of ideas to other district schools. Annehurst people breathed a shaky sigh of relief. How could they make dissemination succeed when area schools considered their attempt to communicate a tasteless show of superiority?

Despite the sobering experiences of the project's first year, the staff plunged ahead with enthusiasm for a second year. Teachers, meanwhile, continued with the business of educating, buoyed by the encouragement of project people willing to help them with problems they defined.

Teachers became increasingly reflective about dimensions of their professional growth. One teacher reported:

> I feel an obligation to keep up with everyone in trying new things and learning new methods. If I were in a

> school where no one ever saw what I was doing or acted very interested, I would use the same methods year after year. We've been told so often what a good school we are, and how effective we are, that I feel I can't let anyone down.

Another teacher felt she had changed at Annehurst primarily by

> . . .getting freed up to take risks, getting out of the rut I had been in at the other school where I had taught. I have grown by being part of a very creative group of teachers. I have a tendency to be too methodical and in control of the situation. . . .

One young teacher said she had grown the most in her attitude toward herself because of

> . . .the nonjudgmental attitude, the receptive attitude of people who want to share; open-mindedness; the flexibility of the cluster situation. I have grown up, accepting myself as an adult.

A first year teacher named his biggest problems:

> . . .struggling with teaching techniques, discipline, structuring of lessons, organizing and finding materials, feeling comfortable in an exposed situation, overcoming the fear of failure, developing individualized techniques. The major contributing factor to the success I enjoyed was the staff—the most loving, energetic, concerned, open-minded, flexible human beings I have known in my whole life.

When asked to say why Annehurst was the kind of place it was, teachers named a large set of factors, but a theme common in what they said was that of caring, coupled with a steady bombardment of ideas:

— "being human and appreciating one another"
— "having fun together; enjoying the work"
— "having ideas thrown out for your choosing; not

being coerced into adopting any of them"
- "being regarded as professional and important"
- "working as a team to solve problems, to cope"
- "ideas, theories, experts, experiences and opportunities, along with a deep commonality of values held by teachers and administrator"
- "the carry-over from the first years, which made us receptive to listening and adapting to the barrage of ideas that came our way"
- "having the children know that the teachers honestly like them and care about them"
- "the staff and children working together to make a comforting place to learn"
- "emphasizing success rather than discipline"
- "the emphasis on creative ways of teaching"
- "being supported in both success and failure."

The teachers' experience of their educational setting seemed mirrored by that of the children. One school psychologist, who worked with the Annehurst staff for only a year, wrote a report detailing his sense of both children and teachers:

> Students at Annehurst school seem to exhibit a feeling that the school is a place where they feel comfortable to share and question. . . .
>
> During class meetings, I have sat back in utter amazement to watch students from various grade levels share very personal and private feelings and experiences. Such disclosures have been met with acceptance, understanding, and appreciation by their peers. . . .Such occurrences take place because. . .of the accepting environment of the school and its daily inhabitants.
>
> During one class meeting, the children were asked to describe why someone should take time to rescue a child shipwrecked on a desert island. . . .One child replied, "Because I am a person, and all people are worthwhile". . . .The child who said this is in second grade.

> T[illegible] teachers have consistently demonstrated a caring attitude toward children. . . .When I sit down with a teacher to discuss the results of psychological testing in other school settings, teachers often ask whether the child will get a tutor to help him with his homework. Teachers in the *School for Tomorrow* ask two questions: (1) "What can I do in the classroom to make this child's school experience a more successful one?" and (2) "Are there things I am doing that might need changing?"

The fundamental relationship of teachers to children continued to flourish in consciously chosen, humanistic ways. Yet outside the school, the chosen direction was not always affirmed. In the second year of the project, relations with parents hit an all-time low.

Project staff people had begun a campaign to draw the community into the excitement of developments. They had produced a brochure and sent articles to the newspapers. They had presented a slide-tape show at a PTA meeting, and now began holding meetings in the homes of Annehurst parents.

Communication suddenly became sidetracked, however, as it unearthed smoldering dissatisfaction about how the children were being taught at Annehurst. Wasn't anyone concerned about order in the classroom anymore? Could the school guarantee that third grade children would finish third grade math by the end of the year?

Some unhappy parents began forming small neighborhood groups to lobby for change in the school. Protesting parents crying "back to basics!" remained unconvinced by evidence (e.g., test scores) that Annehurst was actually paying more attention to basic skills than most traditional schools. The evidence that spoke to parents was the sight of class after class of children wandering around the cluster, with teachers maintaining such low profiles that they could hardly be spotted in the crowd.

Project people kept trying to get conversations back to consideration of the project itself, and how it was designed to help the teachers. What the parents wanted to talk about was what the teachers and principal were doing with their children.

A series of major meetings with parent groups that year had a definite aggressive tone, and the Annehurst staff began to feel that the school was under siege. Could parents not see that teachers sincerely cared about the welfare of their children? Did they not

know how many extra hours teachers spent looking for ways to make learning exciting?

The teacher who was acting as vice-principal had an excellent relationship with many parents, and his efforts at peace making helped somewhat to calm troubled waters. Finally, Troy told parents that if they honestly wanted the school to change, Annehurst could offer a variety of teaching styles. He asked parents to agree on a formal statement of what they wanted changed in the school.

Meanwhile, Troy made a series of decisions about "tightening things up" internally. Teachers were to emphasize, especially in their dealings with parents, the academic side of Annehurst life. If parents wanted it, examples of handwriting could be sent home every Friday. Groans from teachers arose at this suggestion. "Handwriting! Of all things to be concerned about in a kid's education!" But Troy insisted. "And check spelling and punctuation!"

The process of trying to arrive at a consensus about what they thought was important in school had a cathartic effect upon parents. Changes they could agree upon finally sifted down to two: parents could see more of their child's work, and more direct communication with teachers.

Despite all the furor during the course of the year, the June survey of parents indicated that 90 percent were satisfied with the school. Teachers were amazed. The only ones protesting by that time were students: they had not been polled on their assessment of school quality or method of reporting their progress to parents. Teachers were chagrined to realize that they had ignored the opinion of those most directly involved, but pleased at the critical consciousness students were developing.

That second year of the project had resulted in other positive outcomes. Despite the complications, project people were receiving basically positive feedback, and their confidence level was rising. As new director, Don Dyck had shown a missionary zeal for communicating the worth of the project. He and other staff people realized that it would be to their benefit to legitimize the project in the eyes of the community. Rather than attempting to win district people over to their values, they concentrated upon documenting and sharing their results.

Since the district had begun to use the "Teacher Perceiver" interview successfully to select its teachers, Annehurst decided it would be sensible to base staff development efforts on the Teacher

Perceiver themes. Mary Cay Wells, as staff developer, received training in that procedure and began structuring staff development efforts to emphasize an understanding of teacher strength.

Project staff redoubled their efforts to involve teachers from other schools, although there continued to be varying degrees of resistance. They used Title III funds to pay stipends to teachers from other district schools who would participate in Annehurst summer workshops. When some of these teachers became interested in OSIA—Jack Hough's observational system—Mary Cay agreed to work with them on implementing it in their own settings.

By the time the project began its third year of operation, everyone involved seemed to be in a "concluding" frame of mind. This would be the last year of intensive, funded activity, so anything that was going to be accomplished with the help of project people had to be accomplished soon. The school exploded with activity, and the previous year seemed, in retrospect, like the lull before the storm.

The curriculum classification and retrieval system, by now referred to as ACCS (for Annehurst Curriculum Classification System, and pronounced "access"), was finally materializing. Having arrived at a conceptual framework for classifying materials, the teachers along with Jack Frymier worked with the people at Battelle Memorial Institute, a private research foundation, and found hardware which would work for them. Now they were spending hundreds of hours coding the materials.

The committee dealing with grading alternatives, meanwhile, had branched out into the district, and a task force was constituted to find a better reporting system. Annehurst teachers worked with other teachers in the district, and discovered how difficult it was to get central office support for their new ideas—even when those ideas could not be labeled as coming from Annehurst.

Mary Cay's work experience with teachers crystalized around notions consistent with the vision Annehurst had had of itself all along. If teachers were to help children become self-directed learners, they needed to become self-directed learners themselves. In early spring, she presented to the Annehurst staff and OSU professors her ideas about conditions necessary to develop a Personal Growth Design:

(1) commitment by the teacher to improvement
(2) rapport with a person who can give support

(3) an accurate picture of the teacher's own performance

(4) an understanding of personal strengths and the ability to use them for improvement

(5) the formulation of objectives for improving the teacher's performance

(6) teacher-initiated action on the basis of those objectives

(7) affirmation by someone who can recognize growth in progress

(8) renewal of commitment to continuing improvement of behavior and reformulation of objectives.

The Personal Growth Design, which teachers helped Mary Cay revise while they used it for a year and a half, generated interest outside the building. Designed because the teachers wanted to keep track of their own progress, it included a rationale for purposely engaging in personal growth, a timeline, places for recording goals, targets and objectives (as well as suggestions for formulating these), a list of district resource personnel, a place to record a summary of teaching strengths, and a storage envelope. Eventually, this Personal Growth Design was adopted by the district at large.

Staff development activities, however, were not only directed at the individual growth of teachers, but also at community-building. The interpersonal benefits of these helped sustain the energy needed for commitment to the collective task.

One day a visiting principal noticed the "Happy Hour" sign posted in the lounge. She asked about it, and was told that the staff met after school occasionally for drinks and conversation. The principal was surprised: she could not imagine her staff wanting to go out socially, especially on a school day.

Other community efforts were quieter, but effective as well. During a small group workshop activity on values clarification, one veteran teacher expressed her need for social inclusion. The next day, the youngest teacher in the group put a tiny basket of artificial flowers and a note of appreciation on the older teacher's desk. Years later, it was still there—a no-generation-gap reminder of being understood.

Feedback from outsiders about their sense of Annehurst was especially affirming that last year of the project. The school district agreed to send several teachers to the convention of the Association

for Supervision and Curriculum Development so they could talk about activities at the school. This action was regarded as important by teachers because support in the past had so often been tenuous.

Then, in the course of studying evaluation at Annehurst, Kelly Duncan reported to teachers what he saw as a cluster of interrelated expectations operative at Annehurst. Teachers confirmed Kelly's belief that these did act as norms for behavior:

> People believe that
>
> . . .other people can and will be successful. . . .
>
> . . .other people will be more successful as the overall sociocultural environment is gradually made more open and relaxed. . . .
>
> . . .other people should be supported in their efforts to succeed. . . .
>
> . . .intervention in the personal-social environment should be used more as a way of controlling or directing behavior so that it will be successful.

Jack Frymier furnished the staff with a list of "overriding concepts" he would use to describe Annehurst, and these seemed complementary to the norms Kelly Duncan had named. Teachers were pleased that the ideal they tried to live out was operational enough to be visible:

> *Positive regard* is evident at Annehurst: acceptance rather than rejection; hope rather than cynicism; enthusiasm rather than discouragement; and approach rather than avoidance.
>
> *Unconditional regard* presumes something about the sacredness and worth of people just because they exist.
>
> *Freedom* is evident at Annehurst in the opportunity of all people—students, staff, parents, and others—to participate, to discuss, to come and go, to explore, to question, to make explicit their values, their expectations, their concerns.
>
> *Support* is the. . .encouragement to be free—to make proposals, to raise questions, to become involved.

> *The rich and diverse environment. . .*gives both substance and meaning to freedom and choice. Choice (and encouragement to choose) are only meaningful if there are real operations in the environment from which to choose.

Professors and teachers began to wonder whether they should write a book about the Annehurst school experience. They asked Professor I. Keith Tyler from OSU to do private, in-depth interviews with teachers, to see whether an outsider would discover the same reality insiders saw.

Teachers identified weaknesses and problems in the course of those interviews, but these related to "details of program rather than to the over-all atmosphere which prevails." Tyler reached the conclusion that Annehurst could be characterized by features which "distinguished it from run-of-the-mill educational endeavors":

> Annehurst provides a *nurturing environment*—a caring, loving climate for growth for all those intimately associated with it.
>
> *High morale* exists among all concerned—a spirit and aura of good feeling and well-being mixed with a modest pride in the school's apparent success, its good reputation, and the general public recognition.
>
> A remarkable degree of supportive interaction and *cooperative endeavor* exists, with little individualistic striving for personal, competitive advancement. There is a minimum of hierarchial status between teacher and pupil, principal and teacher, university professor and graduate student. Positive reinforcement seems responsible for an unusual degree of emotional security on the part of both adults and children.
>
> *Planned flexibility* in learning arrangements facilitates effective learning by individuals and groups of children. Varied experiences take place anywhere in the school, on the playground, or in the larger community.
>
> An instructional experience *locator system* (ACCS) enables teachers and staff members to draw upon a rich store of learning materials and experiences with a minimum of wasted effort. This feature illustrates the continuous cooperation which exists among the instructional personnel. . . .

Tyler's assessment convinced staff and professors with long involvement that their identification with the school had not made them see it through a rosy haze. They really might have something to share with the rest of the world. They became intrigued with the idea of publishing and formed a writing committee. Should they try to put together a theoretical book—like an up-dated version of *A School for Tomorrow*—or should they try to write a natural history of the school, interspersing school stories among the recorded events? A campaign to collect anecdotes was begun.

The committee spent time all that year poring through old files and meeting to talk over the content of chapters. The mass of data already collected was overwhelming, even before the new material was added to it. Besides, everyone concerned had so many ideas of what was important enough to include. The writing project which had seemed exciting at first gradually began to look too complicated and time-consuming. It was finally abandoned.

Meanwhile, however, at the urging of Don Dyck, Jack Frymier was spearheading another project. The Title III project was ending and the Westerville funds to the university had run out some time ago. The time had come, Jack and Don felt, to start a serious dissemination effort. Since a satisfactory "access" machine had been located and a thesaurus compiled, the curriculum classification system was now ready to be shared with other educators. The continuing work on instruction and evaluation, as well as on staff development, showed similar promise. Maybe they could develop a four-component system of materials which other schools could use and adapt to their own situations. By April 1976, a proposal had been submitted to Phi Delta Kappa International asking for $25,000.

Building on the already existing relationship between Annehurst and The Ohio State University, the proposal suggested establishing a "Commission on Climate for Learning" composed of professors, some Westerville administrators, and former project staff. The commission would initially conceptualize and eventually evaluate the kinds of information and materials that would be developed. Professors, with the help of graduate students, would do the writing. Task groups (professors and teachers together) would actually generate the materials. Practicums would teach teachers how to use the developed materials so they could try them and critique their utility.

Phi Delta Kappa funded the project, and the commission immediately began work on the production of materials. The new project was not really new at all: it was an entwining and drawing

out of strands of work that had happened for years as OSU professors and Annehurst teachers interacted. This new funding would make possible greater dissemination of "Annehurst" ideas because teachers from other schools could be involved in the practicums. In return for their involvement, they could receive academic credit from the university. As part of the task groups, Annehurst teachers could take over more leadership functions from the professors, because each task group would act as the nucleus of a practicum.

Meanwhile, Kappa Delta Pi had agreed to publish a book explaining the Annehurst Curriculum Classification System and the process of its development, so Annehurst teachers who made up the curriculum committee began working with Jack Frymier on drafts of chapters for the book.

All this was happening while Annehurst continued its operation as a school, with its primary goal the education of children. Teachers continued to work with the children and correct their papers, to talk with parents and one another about how to solve problems, and to come up with new ideas for "reading rodeos" and art days with parents.

Adding a dimension of excitement to their work was always the current rallying point, something symbolic upon which they could focus their attention. The learning environment for the adults was as rich and varied as the one they had created for the children.

Troy Mills continued to pursue his low-key style of leadership. Every time a visitor would come through the school wanting to know, for example, how the spelling program had been developed, he would say he could not remember, and a third grade teacher would have to take charge. The media specialist had become an expert tour guide, which was fortunate for Troy, because he was beginning to feel swamped with the streams of constant visitors. Teachers seemed to have shifted into overdrive, and Troy kept the system moving by finding rewards for the teachers wherever he could.

Feelings of success within the school compensated to a large degree for continuing negative attitudes projected by the other district schools. The reading consultant who had been housed at Annehurst had encountered resistance within the district, at least partially because of her association with the school. When a new elementary school opened, she moved her office to that new building in an effort to dissociate herself from a staff she enjoyed and respected. The Commission on Climate for Learning originally had planned to hold meetings at Annehurst as a convenient and familiar

place. Other schools objected: as usual, Annehurst was the center of attention. The commission moved its meetings to a neutral location, surprised that so much of the old antagonism remained.

Despite these persistent reminders that Annehurst was still not completely accepted by the district, the Title III project closing was a satisfying moment for the staff. Project people recognized how patient teachers had been with the extra work that Title III involved. They had been so trusting, going along, by and large, with what the staff wanted them to do. Both the money and the contacts of Title III had greatly enriched their context, but there had been so many forms to fill out! Project people could understand if a collective sigh of relief escaped now.

The three year experience had stretched people intellectually and professionally. Teachers had come to be more aware of their strengths and how to work with them. They had grown more confident that their own sense of well-being was the single most important factor affecting whether their students were learning and growing and feeling like human beings.

Annehurst had gained a better sense of itself through the project years. The close interaction with the OSU professors was important, not because of the content of what the professors had brought (although that was stimulating and valuable), but because of the sense of autonomy and professionalism which their involvement had promoted. Annehurst staff people had been regarded as professionals by professors who were obviously professionals themselves.

The project had helped Annehurst organize its goals more coherently. Instead of so many ideas floating around and being wasted, ideas could be clustered together into tangible schemes for action.

Teachers felt more satisfied with their work by the time the project ended. They had received affirmation that their approach was good, and had had the chance to work seriously on problems they knew existed. They were clearer now about how to get hold of problems—how to conceptualize them in relation to goals—as well as to their intuitive sense of what Annehurst should be.

Both project staff and professors had helped teachers become more self-conscious, more reflective, more able to stand back and evaluate their own behavior. The school people had successfully avoided becoming dependent upon the university people, continuing to challenge the professors' thinking. The relationship had turned out as mutually beneficial as it had promised to be in the beginning.

Despite worries that the departure of the project team would

leave a vacuum in the school, life went on at Annehurst. Teachers missed the project staff people as friends and colleagues, but activities and mechanisms had been put firmly into place. One teacher commented that "a dynamic has been started—like swirling water. Even after you quit swirling, the movement goes on."

The work on tangible projects which overlapped Title III and post-Title III eras made the transition period easier. The ACCS thesaurus continued to be revised, and hundreds more pieces of materials were coded for inclusion. Teachers continued to critique chapters of the ACCS book which Jack Frymier was writing. Just one year after the project ended, the book was in their hands:

Annehurst Curriculum Classification System:
A Practical Way to Individualize Instruction[1]

Sixteen Annehurst staff and graduate students' names shared the title page along with Jack Frymier.

Almost at the same time, Jack began two series of meetings: one, a set of workshops conducted around the country, introducing teachers to the ACCS system; and another, a set of research-oriented meetings for educators interested in studying curriculum through the use of ACCS. Troy and some Annehurst teachers were always invited to these research conferences, since participants invariably wanted to know how the system had been developed.

The activities surrounding the curriculum system had evolved through many stages. The curriculum committee had attempted to cope with myriad aspects of curriculum without reducing their task to a manageable problem solving size. The system which had emerged from this complex whole was a product more authentic and valid than any they could have carefully planned in advance. The struggle which had taken years had culminated in a system they believed was workable, useful for individualizing instruction, and radically different from curriculum systems they knew.

The development of ACCS had been important, though, not only because of the product generated, but because of the process. Annehurst teachers now knew more about how to conceptualize curriculum than did many professors of education. Figuring out how to link instructional materials to abstract individuals had drawn them

[1]Jack Frymier et al., *Annehurst Curriculum Classification System: A Practical Way to Individualize Instruction* (West Lafayette, In.: Kappa Delta Pi, 1977).

into much greater awareness of characteristics of the real children who were their students. Working through how to individualize curriculum had precipitated greater reflection upon the meaning and value of individualization as a whole. All this sorting eventually left the school with a new base of insights from which to operate: new elements added, old ones rearranged, new capabilities for teaching and learning created.

Other dimensions of the corporate undertaking were coming to fruition as well. It had taken a long time to organize school life in a way which seemed fitting. Now, finally, teachers had the time they needed to be working with individual children.

Gradually the staff had created for itself a style of individualized instruction which worked for the children and yet was manageable for the teachers. The push toward finding out from experts what an open school should be seemed to have disappeared in the whirlpool of activity around what already existed.

Now that they had proved their worth to themselves, teachers felt less vulnerable to the tenor of opinion from the district. Then, too, attitudes in the community were gradually changing. As Westerville was increasingly engulfed in suburban sprawl, its insular attitudes were changing. New schools had been built since Annehurst, and some were even open space design. The modernistic building no longer stood out. Gradually, too, other district schools were discovering for themselves the value of the kinds of innovations they had associated with Annehurst. Use of the SRI Teacher Perceiver interview meant more humanistically-oriented teachers were staffing district schools, and this meant that the ranks were swelling with like-minded teachers.

Troy seemed more relaxed to teachers than he had been for years. He spent more time in the lunch room with the children, and there seemed more time now for informal talks with teachers in the corner of the lounge. Teachers reminisced about what they had thought of Troy when the school began, and what they thought of him now. In earlier years, they had often been frustrated by his giving away of authority right and left. Some had thought he really did not know what he was doing, or if he did know, he was not telling anyone.

Now they had come to respect deeply that way of being. Troy had communicated a subtle message: freedom given to teachers is the same sort teachers should give to the children, and every choice is tied up with responsibility.

Troy's authority was not disputed, yet he rarely had to

invoke it. Teachers felt comfortable about disagreeing with his ideas, and unless he felt very strongly otherwise, Troy would let them go ahead with theirs.

Close interpersonal relationships between the principal and the teachers had grown, and people continued to seek out Troy when they needed to sort through life choices or deal with grief. Weddings and babies, illness and death, were experienced communally, and each of these strengthened the communal base from which the staff operated.

Even when the district teachers went on strike in the winter of 1978, no fissures developed in the community structure of the school. The opening of school that fall had been in doubt, but a teacher vote in September had resulted in too few strike votes. Teachers at that time resolved to take action to gain community support, and meanwhile to work without a contract.

By February, negotiations between the Westerville Board of Education and the Westerville Education Association had grown tense because of lack of progress toward a settlement. Teachers at Annehurst talked in quiet tones about negotiations. Troy would trade information with the WEA teacher representatives. Teachers would gather around him in the lounge, asking what he thought would happen, talking over their own feelings and what they thought the WEA should do. At staff meetings, Troy would caution them against harsh judgments of decisions some teachers in the school might make.

Despite the attention to community dynamics, tension was apparent inside the school. Teachers thought Troy was not acting at all like himself, but they made excuses to one another about the pressure he must be under from the school board.

When the strike vote finally came, Annehurst teachers chose to picket at their own school. Although Troy had originally wanted them to picket anywhere else, they had convinced him they would have more control over the situation (and therefore a better chance of maintaining good community relations) if they were to picket their home school. Not all the teachers in the school were members of the WEA, yet none crossed the picket lines. Although the district as a whole remained "open" while teachers were on strike, Annehurst was one of five district schools to close the first day because of the lack of supervisory personnel.

The strike lasted little more than a week, but teachers were glad to abandon picket lines and slushy snow when an agreement

was finally reached. The lounge overflowed with cookies and fudge and Troy's favorite (low calorie) doughnut holes in celebration of the return to normal. Except for the inconvenience of straightening out what had become confused during the strike and of trying to replace some materials that had been lost, operations were back to normal within a few days.

Teachers spent time reflecting on the meaning of the strike, both among themselves and with the children. They traded stories with one another of favorite strike incidents: Diane facing a jail term because the WEA had refused to comply with a back-to-work order; the Annehurst custodian being reprimanded by a supervisor for bringing coffee out to the picket line. Such stories soon became incorporated in the school's saga, to be filed away and repeated later with other favorite stories to teachers who would later join the staff.

That spring, even more visitors came through the school. A former Annehurst teacher who was now a principal in Toledo brought his staff to experience the school climate. Jack Frymier brought an educator from Australia who was interested in ACCS. A graduate student took notes in the lounge over the course of a whole year, trying to see exactly how the staff interacted.

Meanwhile, school proceeded. Children constructed models of Tutankhamen's tomb and wrote modern stories of mythical monsters. Parents continued to be concerned about their children, and teachers regularly phoned them about accomplishments and problems. Fourth graders struggled with long division, and tutors worked with learning disabled children. Principal and teachers interacted much as they always had—with intense conferences and nonsensical conversations intertwined in the close quarters of the teachers' lounge. Children continued to come up with their own ideas about the operation of school life—such as a whole day for honoring the school secretary with banners and breakfast and special events, because of the importance of her efforts in the creation of the school's ethos.

The years after the Title III project exhibited few of its fireworks, but the momentum toward development continued. The school had a strong set of life-giving norms, and the persons within it pushed along their system to better fit to the ideal image of it which they shared.

Annehurst should be written about, one Ohio State professor pointed out, because so many people have lost faith in what can be accomplished in schools: "There's something symbolic in what they've done. It offers a kind of promise of what might be."

4

An Experimenting School

One might ask, "How has Annehurst evolved into a humane, cohesive, autonomous, responsible, adaptive educational community, able to enact in reality what many schools can only talk about?" The answer seems to be that the staff came to know themselves as capable, successful professionals through experiencing successful resolution of problems that were related to the fulfillment of their vision.

By grappling collectively with these problems, the Annehurst staff members have developed procedures and know-how for improving their performance, not simply as individuals, but as a group. The people in the school have gradually built a powerful capacity to adapt and to continue into the future a never-ending pursuit of the ideal. This way of educating has no name in the lexicon of the profession, but it might be termed an experimenting—not experimental—way of operating a school.

The identity of Annehurst was forged over the years by the personalities and events and by the particular vision Annehurst staff members held of their goal. The teachers and the principal know who they are and why they do what they do because they have created their own living social reality in the school—in an experimenting way—from the inside out.

Interaction and communication among staff has been intense throughout the school's history, and that mode continues today. Having struggled through so much with one another, teachers know their own strengths and weaknesses and those of their colleagues. Within the small cluster groups, teachers recognize the distinctiveness of individuals. Teachers refer to the storeroom as "Bette's room," because Bette has far more materials there than anyone else. Tonia is so efficient that other teachers are forever groaning when they see how far along she is with her work. Everyone knows that Debby is terrible at crafts but fantastic with outdoor games. This

awareness is a great advantage when program arrangements need to be planned: talents can always be exploited, and weaknesses can be compensated for by someone else's strength.

Awareness of themselves is manifested in the reflective comments teachers make about their own development.

> When we first started class meetings, I never thought I'd be able to handle them. . . .After this year's experience with spelling, I'll be able to organize activities much better for next year.

Awareness of "growing edges" is affirmed. No individual is expected to be perfect, yet the corporate endeavor is always expected to be a success. When "upper cluster" teachers decided to undertake a program of affective education, some teachers felt much more comfortable with handling group process activities than did others. Two of the teachers with backgrounds in counseling encouraged the others, all of whom wanted to try but were hesitant about their competence.

> We have to recognize our limitations. This may not work. . . .I'm afraid I'm not going to do very well. . . . No, I'm sure you will. It's a question of getting hold of a whole different way of teaching. Last year when I taught about feelings, the kids weren't ready to open up until I did. . . .

This kind of interaction is typical: possibilities for improving operations are looked at squarely, but so are weaknesses. The decision to go ahead despite some imperfection is always tempered by the resolve to monitor constantly how operations are proceeding.

However strong the idealism among teachers, they maintain a healthy realism about themselves and the children. For themselves, they recognize their need for stimulation in the process of teaching.

> Let's do the values program in January: January's boring. . . .I can't stand rocks anymore: how about if I change to ponds?

In relation to the children, teachers show a complementary

realistic appraisal. They are aware of children's lives and the complexities of happenings which can interfere with learning—problems with parents at home, or romance in the fourth grade. Children are never put down in conversations among teachers, and people new to the staff are often struck by this norm, which is so different from schools where they have taught before. Teachers describe the behavior of youngsters who are driving them crazy or complain in a funny, exaggerated way about their battles with students who do not get their work finished. Students are seen neither as the enemy nor as little darlings, but as real, complicated people, capable of responsible action and reflection.

Information which teachers receive from the children about their school experience is fed back to all the teachers who deal with the students. The pool of information which teachers can draw upon is thereby much enlarged. When standardized achievement test results arrived one October, for example, and Annehurst students showed such spectacular scores that the principal had them rechecked, teachers began wondering whether they were pushing the students too hard. They asked one another for indications the children might be giving. One teacher reported having a group discussion of satellites and stars in her third grade. When asked what made a satellite a satellite, one third grader told her, "Study and hard work!" Jennie told the other cluster teachers she could understand the answer if she had asked what makes a star a star, but a satellite?

Teachers know that the creation of their social reality is in their own hands, and that they have the power to draw the children into their image of school.

> Kids think school is what you tell them it is. Parents are always asking how the kids manage to keep everything straight, but the kids don't have any other experience of school to compare with this one. You tell them, "This is the way we do things here," and they take it in stride, just as if you'd be telling them something more conventional, but which they'd never heard of either.

Information brought by individual teachers into the small cluster group is processed there. If that information is relevant only to that cluster, it is acted upon or stored for future reference. Other-

wise, it might be brought into the collective consciousness of all the teachers in the school at a staff meeting, or more likely, in the quick interchange around the tables in the teachers' lounge.

Relatively little information flows through formal channels. Most is exchanged as teachers explode with news the minute they walk in the lounge door. The room is so small that one funny story of playground duty catches up everyone into a single, laughing, sympathetic group. The timing of interactions is accelerated by the shortness of recess and lunch breaks, so the scenario sometimes resembles a fast-paced situation comedy.

Staff people know who they are, not only because of the consciousness-raising information exchanged internally, but because of their transactions with the environment.

> Every time contact is made with the central office or with other district schools, *we* have to figure out what is happening. Parents who come in to volunteer see what *we* are doing with the school.

Teachers from other district schools who serve on committees with Annehurst teachers react to what they see as Annehurst ideas. The school's identity is reinforced by the perception, both of insiders and of outsiders, that Annehurst has boundaries.

New teachers are drawn into contact with that identity, both by experiencing its on-going reality as they interact with other teachers and by hearing stories from them about what has happened in the past. On their first encounter with a puzzling antagonistic attitude in a district committee, the new teachers are likely to be clued in by reference to the history of difficult relations in the district. If they are discouraged by their fumbling first year attempts at teaching, someone is certain to tell them how bad a sterling teacher was when she began. A kindergarten child kicking and yelling the first week of school will prompt stories of other kindergarteners to be remembered. When ACCS is introduced to new teachers, they are told the story of its development—complete with flourishes of interpersonal difficulties and years of struggle—so that ACCS becomes not just a mechanical retrieval system but a part of the communally owned history.

The identity of the school, however, is most tangible to staff people in the lived interaction of the present. An attitude of collegi-

ality is strikingly apparent to other educators who know something about the way the school operates.

> Perhaps it's because of the way Troy relates to teachers, conveying a great deal of respect for them as persons. Maybe it's his expectation that they will operate as professionals which moves them to act like colleagues.

Although people in the school play out assigned roles—the principal acts like a principal, the secretary acts like a secretary—the overriding sense of a collective task means that they relate to one another primarily laterally rather than hierarchically. The principal rarely pulls rank, and teachers never hesitate to object when they disagree with a decision. A child getting sick at lunch time is a shared concern of teacher and secretary, conferring together over whether the youngster is faking or should have to take work home with him or her.

Teachers gain a clear idea of how much they can rely upon one another because they know one another so well. Every teacher sees at least five others teaching every day. They know how the other teachers relate to the children in their classes, so they know whether their own expectations of the children are shared with the other teachers. The global communal task of the school is reduced to operational size in the small cluster groups of teachers who work together every day to carry off the program in their shared instructional area. Each teacher has to be relied upon, each teacher has to accept responsibility for the operation of the program in the cluster or the whole cluster would be in trouble.

Great demands are placed on a teacher's stamina, patience, and general good humor through the expectation that each will perform daily, and in public, in a competent, sophisticated manner, in line with the humanistic goals of the school. On the other hand, more than the usual number of support systems are available to teachers in this school, making possible a higher than usual performance level. Pressure to improve constantly does not build into frustration because options for improvement exist and new ones are created constantly.

> I never have a problem finding someone to talk with about my teaching. Since there are no walls in the classroom, the

> classroom, the exchange of ideas and solutions to problems is a natural part of the day. It's as simple as walking by another teacher's desk on your way to your own.

Support in professional matters, however, explains only in part how the staff is held together. Interpersonal emotional support is woven through the Annehurst life on so many levels that it is impossible to factor out its function. Birthdays are a cause of celebration, as are announcements of wedding plans or pregnancy. Divorces and illness are a cause of worry and shared compassion. Such happenings are like punctuation marks in the daily mundane of living together, which involves enjoying a teacher's story telling before a first grade class, or sympathizing with a part time teacher looking for a full time job.

Subtle encouragement underlies so many conversations that a visitor begins to see in the Annehurst way of operating an interpersonal stance which is life-affirming. Compliments are not meted out haphazardly. On the other hand, whatever is good is recognized by someone. The principal might brag to a visitor about the subtle teaching style of a staff member. One teacher might tell another how well she thought that teacher had handled a problem in her class: not noticing is difficult, when the other is only a few feet away. In a small group cluster meeting, comments like "That's a good idea!" are heard much more frequently than "We tried that before" or "That will never work."

As with the children, however, teachers are authentic in their dealings with one another. Feelings, even negative ones, are expressed openly. If a teacher thinks something is a bad idea, that will be expressed openly, but in a manner which is not destructive. Teachers seem highly skilled in the maintenance functions to be performed for effective group work.

Teachers talk easily about teaching and the children, but also about many topics not related to school at all. Most popular topics at Annehurst are new recipes and good restaurants, but discussion of television shows ("Did you see David Frost last night?"), tennis ("Will we be able to double again this Saturday?"), and popular novels is common. Little time is wasted. On the other hand, teachers do not seem compulsive about time.

Many conversations are nonsensical, and people often outdo one another with wry humor. Joking and teasing are constant, but

they are never used to hurt or insult. Instead, the style is open and inclusive. In-jokes are always explained to anyone who does not understand. Everyone is welcome to tease everyone else, including the principal, who both teases and enjoys being teased.

Troy, in fact, often uses teasing in place of criticism. When Bob hung papers on his classroom wall with scotch tape and the painters complained, Troy dramatized to everyone in the lounge who would listen (including Bob) how he had talked to the painters in Bob's behalf: "We made an announcement about scotch tape five years ago, I know. Bob must not have been listening." When the "lunch room ladies" complained about teachers who loaned fifty-five pennies to their students so they could buy lunch, Troy acted out (for Tonia's benefit, and for the benefit of all who would pay attention to him in the lounge) how Tonia must have gone around her classroom wickedly handing out all the pennies she could to upset the ladies who had to count them.

Through all this interaction—in the teasing and joking, in the conversations about novels or spouses or food, with celebrating of good news or commiserating over bad—the open expression of feelings is the norm. Perhaps because sharing on this level is so constant, the transition to sharing about professional problems is so fluid. In fact, personal and professional are so interwoven that teachers probably do not experience a transition at all.

Only four of the teachers on the original staff remain at the school today, yet new teachers are still socialized to conform to the same norms which guided the first staff. Some say it is the principal who keeps alive the vision which guided the forebears. Others disagree, believing that if the principal were to leave, the same dynamic would continue in the school because it is so ingrained in the way of life of the teachers.

The power of that way of life to socialize newcomers is apparent, but teachers entering any new school are socialized to conform to that setting's expectations. At Annehurst, the socialization process works as it does at other schools to maintain and reinforce the existing patterns of operating. What is distinctive are those patterns, so oriented toward making possible continual revision and improvement.

> Those teachers believe that they are as good as their myth. It's not really true, but it's sustaining. Troy is a great con artist. He convinces teachers that they can

do great things, which raises their self-esteem, which allows them to operate much better.

At the same time, people are realistic about themselves and their limitations, so they make exceptions when they fail. They believe the best about themselves and one another, so they expect that they will be successful. When they are not, that does not change the rule.

Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of the Annehurst school is the joy that is apparent everywhere. People enjoy the work and one another, and operate communally in a way which seems to be life-serving for them all. A person who walks in the teachers' lounge and finds it quiet—not bubbling over with jokes and animated conversation—is likely to ask what's wrong. Small group planning meetings are sprinkled with funny comments—at least one minute of humor for every four of serious work—but the humor does not seem to be a waste of time. Instead, it lightens and speeds the work and puts teachers in a good mood for relating to the children when they go back to the classroom.

The great amount of laughing which goes on among teachers is one expression among many of a sense of humanity in that educational setting. The same attitude of affirmation of what is human can be seen in the way the principal encourages teachers in their professional development, in the way teachers touch the children, even in the way children relate to classmates with emotional problems.

Teachers honestly care about the students and treat them as human beings worthy of respect. A conversation between a teacher and child is not interrupted any more than if that teacher were talking to an adult. The single most common topic of conversation among staff people is the welfare of individual children. Enormous amounts of time might be devoted to a relatively simple problem, if it seems to relate in some important way to a child's development.

Just before Christmas one year, for example, a fourth grade boy was suspected of lying. His mother had complained to the principal that he had been sent outside to wait for her in the cold, even though she had sent a note to school asking that he be allowed to wait inside. His teacher said she had told him to stay inside, since she knew he was recovering from a bad cold.

From the time of that complaint, there followed a complicated sequence of events in which the principal tried to track down

who might have told the child to go outside; the teacher and principal talked with the boy; the mother, teacher, and principal all conferred together about how to get at the truth; and the boy was encouraged to look around the school for the adult who had told him to go outside. Eventually, the boy admitted to his mother that he had lied because he was afraid of her reaction.

Then a whole new process of working with the child began. Both teacher and principal spent considerable time talking with him about his reasons for lying, about their disappointment in him, and about how lies become tangled webs. His whole class met to talk about lying, discussing the maturity needed to face up to problems. Together the teacher and student made a plan for working on this problem, which involved checking in periodically on his progress. Such problems are not dismissed summarily.

The whole process of dealing with problems like these is discussed openly in the lounge, where any teacher around can hear what is happening. The experience of any one teacher then becomes available to all. Last year's teachers are always providing helpful background information on a child. The speech therapist and the learning disability tutors confer constantly with teachers over children they see individually. The art teacher, music teacher, physical education teacher, all feed information about children back into the clearinghouse of teachers gathered in the lounge, and collect information they need as people respond to their input and questions.

Some of the information shared seems to have little point to it except sheer appreciation. Teachers tell stories to one another about comments children have made, especially those which reflect growing awareness of themselves or of the meaning of learning.

All these various dimensions of Annehurst—its identity, its integration, the attitudes which teachers hold and promote—all underlie the particular way the school's task is undertaken.

Clearly, the staff's task is a collective one. They seem determined to sink or swim together. Information is exchanged so quickly, not only because the lounge makes that exchange physically possible, but because everyone needs to know what is happening if they are to carry out a coordinated effort effectively.

New teachers have to be helped to teach well, because their success is vital for the success of the whole. Skills and ideas of a few teachers are quickly generalized if the staff recognizes that wider dispersement would be useful for the corporate enterprise. Selfish-

ness about materials or space is meaningless in this setting, because it could only lead to failure for everyone. Concerns about territory never even arise. Teachers are not "hurt" when other teachers discipline "their" children. Children are not owned in any case. Status cannot be gained by out-maneuvering colleagues, since the only performance honestly respected is cooperative.

Like the teacher who "shares her love with us all," Troy respects and pays attention to all the teachers. Competition to win his regard is therefore pointless. Besides, the teachers themselves control most aspects of life which in other schools are seen as favors the principal dispenses.

People in tune with the internal logic of Annehurst find it nearly impossible to imagine a school where teachers do not share, where the principal hands out orders, where the children have little to say about their educational experience. Teachers with experience at other schools, however, are often struck by the contrast. Whenever Annehurst teachers become depressed with how badly they are doing, a seasoned colleague is likely to remind them of how bad things could be.

Annehurst staff people have an intuitive sense of the direction they choose for the school, and they consciously tune into feelings of right or wrong to judge strategies of the moment. Their commitment is not so much to a well thought out plan as it is to a process of working progressively toward desired ends.

> I don't think Troy knew how it was going to work when he asked the OSU people out. He just had a feeling that it would be good for the school, so he started, knowing that the school was already strong enough to maintain itself.

The energy generated within the school constantly pushes it forward. Teachers get excited at the stimulation they find in their work with the children. They are strengthened by interpersonal affirmation and knowledge that their vision is communally held. The internal dynamic is so generally shared that individuals are carried forward by the energy of the whole.

Ideas from the outside are always flowing into the school, and whenever a good idea appears, people seem uncomfortable until they can fit it in somewhere. The same uncomfortable feeling arises when something starts to go wrong. No one expects that

things will always be perfect. On the other hand, when they are not, they need to be changed. Because the information exchange is so efficient, all the teachers know quickly when something is going wrong or when something is particularly right. Each individual acts as a monitoring device in relation to the whole system.

Although this sense of the whole is strong, staff people seem not to lose a sense of themselves individually. As individuals, they are reflective about their own behavior and often criticize themselves aloud.

> I was so bad yesterday. I was yelling at the kids for being out of their seats so much. Then I went home and read an article about how teachers are supposed to recognize positive behavior. Had I said anything positive to the kids when they were in their seats? No!

Usually such confessions of failure are made within the context of a request for help from other teachers, even if that help is only brainstorming about options for other teaching strategies.

> Does anybody have any ideas about Kevin? I don't know what to do with him anymore. None of the techniques the psychologist suggested has worked, and I find myself nagging him all day. . . .

Consideration of what to do about another teacher's problem is undertaken as seriously as consideration of one's own. Problems, like successes, are communally owned.

Although many of the smaller issues are framed as problems to be solved, many questions are considered in much broader terms. Frequently teachers will be overheard questioning what it is that they really want the children to learn. Are the activities they have thought up going to teach what they intend? What are the subtle messages conveyed in the experiences they create? How will the kids be able to relate all this to what they already know? Is there a better way to go about things than the way they tried before? The push toward doing things well, professionally and thoughtfully, is in the lifeblood of the school.

In the course of all this interaction, the school as a real, living, social entity is transformed. Persons inside change and are changed. Teachers, like students, mature and learn. They come to

new realizations about their capacities and grow toward freer and more centered expresssion. New teachers gain experience and are taught by their students and the teachers who surround them.

But more than the individuals, the pattern of their life has changed. When Annehurst teachers searched for, and ended up nearly building from scratch, a new reading program, they began developing within the school the capacity for collective learning and for decisive, professional action. When they discovered that they could incorporate a group of high-powered university professors into their community and not be overwhelmed by them, their sense of identity reached a new plateau. When the school took on a large federal project, to be managed not by outside innovators but by themselves, Annehurst established the right to choose its own destiny.

With all these accomplishments—and even in the course of some carefully considered failures—Annehurst acquired new patterns of acting which were then available the next time they were needed.

Annehurst staff people have engaged in their task and transacted with it. They have not pretended that theirs was a basically custodial function in relation to children. Neither have they elected representatives to think and act for them and report back on progress. Instead, they have bitten into the task of educating, with a soundly based but open-ended vision of what that means.

The power of their experience seems to have transformed them because they have been open to being transformed by it. They have tried to make meaning of all the messages brought into the school from the outside—from experts about how the school might be, from the district about how they should conform, from parents pleased or upset about the job they were doing, from the university about what fine teachers they were.

On their own, they have reached out to the environment for resources they needed—for hundreds of volunteers, for used paperbacks, for university professors, for grants from the federal government, the school district, and Phi Delta Kappa. When they have taken these resources into the school, they have incorporated elements selectively, accepting only those which seemed to fit. Many of the original project goals were rejected as too technological once they were in operation; OSIA was judged as having only limited usefulness in their open school setting; ideas like behavior modification—good in theory—were tried, but then the staff moved

76

on to more fitting modes of operating.

In a microcosmic way, the staff reaches out to the environment for resources simply because each one lives somewhere else besides school. Although the same is true for every other school, the job of creating the program at Annehurst demands from each teacher as much of a contribution as that person can possibly make. For this reason, teachers are encouraged by one another and by the principal to take graduate courses and to attend workshops and seminars. The individual development of teachers is considered important in itself, but also because each individual capacity expanded is an additional resource for the whole. Each newfound skill, each spouse with a particular talent, each contact with a business firm, is potentially useful in relation to the program.

At the same time as Annehurst is open to the environment, it is centered in itself. The school's internal experience of teaching and learning, of interacting and sharing, of facing problems together and weathering crises, is known to all and reflected upon by all. Staff meetings are short and to the point. Time is spent on problems teachers think need solving rather than on information the principal wants digested. The intensity of communication and meaning-making processes creates a strong and stable base for decisions.

Because the identity of the school is so strong, what is appropriate to it is usually clear. What is inappropriate is experienced as clearly wrong. On the other hand, the amount of experimenting which has happened over the years illustrates that judgments of appropriateness can hardly be made in the abstract before some experiencing has generated needed information.

Entering into new experiences then, even those with a great deal of ambiguity, involves a minimum of risk. So much is known about what the school really is, so much is stable about its basic operating patterns, that these can be relied upon even when a new situation to be encountered is relatively unpredictable.

When the way teachers have done things in the past no longer seems like a good way to continue, looking for new ways is satisfying rather than threatening. The ideal of what Annehurst should be is so salient in daily life that it feels more comfortable to change than to remain the same.

In any case, few things change at any one time. Most changes are incremental—almost imperceptible. Teachers might change the grade level they teach to make possible a new configuration in a cluster, but they are the same person operating in the same

school, after all. Reading conferences might replace reading groups, a machine might help considerably with tracking down appropriate learning materials for each child, but basically school life goes on as it has. Teachers engage in the same task as before. Only elements are rearranged, each change making possible an improved capacity to do better the task which is Annehurst's whole reason for being.

5

The Meaning of the Story

Is this a unique story? Yes—in the sense that all schools have their unique histories. School sagas emerge over time, like the tales by which old Norsemen recounted the experience of their youth. They retell and probably embellish—in ways that provide continuity and direction to the community's experience—how things used to be. Like other schools, Annehurst has a saga, but this account is more than that.

A typical saga is passed on with details forgotten and myths remembered, through an oral tradition in which the telling is as important as the reality described. In preparing this account we have had access to Annehurst's saga, but have relied more heavily on archives and interviews. We have probed the memories and interpretations of participants, and observed the reality of the school ourselves. The story as we have told it is, we believe, true to the experienced reality of the school in its first decade. And, while it is unique, it may contain useful lessons for other educators.

We offer an explanation—a moral perhaps—that the story suggests to those who want to create good climates for learning:

> Under favorable conditions and with appropriate leadership, a good climate for learning can be cultivated by developing a competent and cohesive staff, generating an affirmative ethos, and engaging in an experimenting way of schooling.

Favorable Conditions

Annehurst began under a mixture of favorable and hazardous conditions. The school was created from the ground up. Therefore, it had neither a saga nor past mistakes that had to be lived with.

The building was designed in a way which almost forced the staff to work together closely. Such a design was a radical departure from the style of buildings in the district, and many predicted that it would never be possible to carry off a program under such conditions.

The leader chosen was up to the task. He approached the challenge and risks inherent in his situation as a personally meaningful growth opportunity. He *knew* that a good school could be created and he *knew* that a good school was a growth-oriented place. He had a vision, however vague and ambiguous and open-ended, and he willed his vision into reality. The district granted him sufficient freedom to act to implement that vision, and he had adequate courage and self-confidence both to use the freedom available and to fight for more when it was needed.

The Columbus metropolitan community was rich in resources—particularly ideas and possibilities—and the Westerville School District was affluent enough to provide substantial material resources. But many other districts are rich, particularly in ideas and unexplored possibilities which could be used by schools. What was special about Annehurst was its ability to seek out and to acquire the resources that it could use.

This quality of active searching produced for Annehurst two important accidents with positive consequences: the connection with Jack Frymier and The Ohio State University College of Education through the "School for Tomorrow" project, and the Title III project contact made through a parent of a child in the school. By being open and searching for opportunities, and by being in charge of their own development, the people of Annehurst made these desirable accidents happen.

A Competent and Cohesive Staff

Because the school was consciously created, the principal was able to select people who were more than simply proficient. They were selected because they could see in the principal's vision of the school their own ideals about education. They resonated as persons with the principal and with one another. They were active, energetic, creative people who could elaborate and expand the vision collaboratively and who wanted to accomplish that. Other sorts of people were not employed or, if recruited by mistake, were counseled out of the school.

Their proficiency as teachers was not the most important quality of those hired: many teachers came straight out of teacher training or with limited experience as teachers. However, they were committed to the idea of school as a place in which people grow, and they were growing themselves and wanted more of it.

Only a few—perhaps none—of these teachers really knew themselves as developing persons when they first came to Annehurst. Early in the school's history, however, the core staff became aware of the importance of the personal development of the teachers, and began not only to talk and think about it but to act upon it. For example, in those formative years, Mary Cay Wells had extended conversations on her own initiative with Ross Mooney, a professor at OSU, trying to clarify the meaning of her own personal development as a professional at Annehurst. However it came about (and we have not been able to find out just how it happened), the core staff articulated and began deliberately to pursue ways to enhance their personal growth as teachers. This development-oriented push soon became an important part of the ethos of the school. As new staff joined the others, they were socialized to value and seek their own further development—not as a duty imposed but as a personally valuable, rewarding part of being a professional teacher.

An Affirmative Ethos

The vision held by the principal and affirmed by the initial staff was articulated quickly and established as the fundamental aim and purpose of the school. But unlike philosophies generated in many schools, this one was put to use. It served and still serves—in slightly modified form—as a guide for action. Day-to-day choices of teaching methods and materials, of evaluation techniques, and of fine-grained teaching behaviors are made in reference to the school's vision. This is perhaps the most difficult aspect of the story to make credible for readers who have not personally experienced Annehurst. School philosophies are usually honored more in the breach than in practice, but at Annehurst the school philosophy is honored as real, providing a ground for coherence of action and attitude which permeates the lives of children and teachers.

The Annehurst ethos has several other important dimensions. The corporate group is regarded as a community and is cen-

tral in the conduct of school affairs. Individuals have problems, but they are shared as group problems. The community has problems, but they are owned individually. Every person in the school, adult and child, is expected to be competent, responsible, successful, and to grow—to become increasingly capable of dealing with the opportunities and problems they face.

This high expectation is fulfilled very frequently. Both the children and teachers consciously experience their own competence and success, and they feel good about that. Caring for one another is an important contributing factor. So is sharing of information about professional and personal matters.

More than anything else, though, the ethos carries an expectation of joyful living, a happy experience of being present with people who are happy, active, and full of life. The people of Annehurst experience a satisfying life and that satisfaction is shared—it infects others in a reciprocal and energizing way.

Two tempering aspects of the ethos prevent this joyfulness from being dissipated in a haze of frivolity, however. The challenge of learning and growing is taken seriously: the concrete reality of what is and is not working to facilitate learning is and must be confronted constantly. Similarly, a norm for open and authentic expression of ideas and feelings is enforced: people interact so richly and intensely that phoniness would be quickly apparent.

The joyfulness of the climate at Annehurst is a major manifestation of this ethos, but it is a sign, rather than a cause of a good climate for learning. The causal factors are more likely attitudes and expectations which are shared, reinforced, enhanced, and celebrated. The people of this school act out and experience caring about and sharing in the development of one another. They both take and give responsibility for supporting that development, and they derive joy from the experience of living together in this way.

Appropriate Leadership

Annehurst has had a principal whose vision and style have provided a stable framework of structure and continuity for the emergence of its ethos and the way of educating. His style is low-keyed—one of sharing authority and forcing others to the forefront. He is seen as first among equals, and dominant only in certain administrative realms. He insists that the expertise of the individuals

or groups most knowledgeable and interested in a particular matter should guide decisions taken by the school. His style is a kind of "leading from the rear" which values communal more than hierarchical relationships. He combines in an unusual way a confidence in himself and his staff to cope successfully, with a tentativeness about whether a particular way of coping is best. He is an "experimenter." He approaches issues and problems as a scientist would, framing the area of inquiry, searching for and considering rival hypotheses, putting the best of them to empirical test, and reflecting upon the meaning of the results. This style differs from that of the conventional scientist, however, in that he judges the success of an experiment according to one crucial criterion: does the tested hypothesis move us toward the vision, toward the goal of achieving growth for persons?

Two main recurrent patterns in this principal's behavior support his experimental approach to the development of the school. With one hand, he constantly monitors what is happening, what is working, and where problems are arising. He gets information firsthand and early, usually before problems become crises. And he is able, located in his chair in the center of the action in the teachers' lounge, to initiate or stimulate appropriate action on a "real time" basis.

With the other hand, he constantly and vigorously searches for nourishment for the school. Acquisitive with regard to ideas, materials, and people, he steadily brings them into the building to see what they can contribute. While this activity is conducted vigorously, the spoils of the hunt are taken tentatively, until the judgments of teachers and the test of what works serve to convince him. He is not dogmatic about ideas that appeal to him personally, and he does not expect to find one perfect and universally applicable way to help teachers or children grow.

His main leadership style is one of intense and detailed concern for the welfare of the people in the school. He works at getting to know them well and is adept at giving them positive feedback in multiple, sophisticated ways. Through a myriad of subtle comments and actions he affirms individual growth and encourages growth of the staff collectively. He seems conservative and cautious in demeanor, but he willingly risks the success of the school on his belief that the teachers will grow enough to cope with problems confronted. While aware of his authority and sure that others acknowledge it, he reserves the exercise of power in direct form for matters

which he judges as essential to the well-being of the school. On those occasions, teachers are surprised: "Troy is not behaving in his normal way; he is acting like a principal."

An Experimenting Way of Schooling

The people of Annehurst have a distinctive way of being a school, which has evolved continuously over its first ten years. They recognize this way as being their own creation, enhanced by the ideas of others, shaped in the struggle to find good ways of operating—emergent and imperfect, but moving gradually toward the ideal set by the original vision. The vision, and the continuous tension of difference between that ideal and the deficiencies of the present, provide the central dynamic for evolution. The teachers have learned, and deeply believe, that they have responsibility for the pursuit of their ideal; they are responsible for what happens, and they are responsible for resolving problems. They know that they have support—powerful support—available from their colleagues and friends inside the school. Help may come from outside, but the task of making this school better is perceived to be theirs alone.

This school has an unusual capacity for centering. New information and feedback picked up by any individual or subunit is quickly and directly brought to the attention of the group as a whole. As a whole, they are able to focus attention on new information and to devise ways to respond to it. This capacity for centering, founded on the characteristic face-to-face communication and on the community ethos, enables the school to act coherently and pro-actively in pursuit of the vision.

Annehurst also has a balanced and finely tuned pattern of specialization which enables the staff to bring its best talent to bear on each specific task. This specialization of roles is not defined by formal job assignments; it is based on the recognized personal strengths and personal needs of individuals. Teachers enjoy what they are doing because they are allowed and encouraged to do what they enjoy. Everyone knows that each person has strengths, so every member of the staff has a strong contribution to make to the group's tasks. Each member's professional self-identity is thereby associated in a powerful way with the self-identity of the group as a whole.

These capacities of the staff as a group enable it to undertake

pragmatic problem solving as a group. Using the vision as an important criterion (along with other conventional ones such as cost, practical feasibility, political feasibility), the school continuously engages in what has been called evolutionary experimentation.[1] According to one school of thought, this form of human developmental activity underlies societal and cultural evolution. While the people of Annehurst do not describe what they do in these terms, their way of creating this school is a clear example of that theory.

The results of this collective problem solving process are manifested mainly in gradual, incremental improvements in the school's way of operating, but it has other consequences even more important which are less visible. By experiencing successful resolution of problems related to the fulfillment of their vision, Annehurst's staff have come to know themselves as capable, successful professionals. By grappling collectively with problems, they have increasingly developed their own procedures and know-how. In this way, the school has gradually built a powerful capacity to make adaptations and to continue into the future the never-ending pursuit of the ideal.

The experience of success, both as individuals and as members of the group, and the joyful experience of professional living together, has one further important consequence: it gives the staff energy, strength, and a feeling of optimism which are renewing and personally satisfying. By working together to make this a better school, the staff has not become drained of energy or oppressed by the burdens they carry. On the contrary, their efforts have produced a flow of even greater energy and willingness to work hard to improve their school.

Annehurst emerged from a crucible of experience that was consciously sought and deliberately reflected upon by the staff. That experience was unique, but the growth acquired through it is growth that could be achieved by other schools if they had the internal qualities that Annehurst has developed. The way Annehurst developed was substantively idiosyncratic, a consequence of the interactions of personalities, events, conditions, and deliberately chosen purposes and means. But in a process sense, the way Annehurst developed was natural—an evolutionary process of social learning and development. Other schools also develop naturally, but not

[1] Edgar S. Dunn, *Economic and Social Development: A Process of Social Learning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971).

always with results that so many teachers, students, parents, administrators, and outsiders judge to be good.

The two of us have seen in this story what we were able to see. Others studying it would surely make different emphases. We hope they will. We hope, too, that others will study other good schools and find meaning there for the rest of us, since human understanding cannot help but grow through serious efforts by people from different perspectives to make meaning of the reality they confront. To us, Annehurst gives reason to be hopeful about education. We have found evidence of ordinary teachers and administrators both caring about children and acting competently to help those children grow individually and collectively, and simultaneously helping the teachers grow into persons more adequate in their tasks. Annehurst shows us that adaptive transformation can occur in schools, if there is enough will and enough goodwill. The Annehurst way is surely not the only way to create a good school, but this way has worked very well at Annehurst.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM KAPPA DELTA PI

Reading in Content Areas
by Maurice Kaufman, Northeastern University
1981. 30 pp.
Paperback $3.00

Annehurst Curriculum Classification System
by Jack Frymier, The Ohio State University
1977. 391 pp.
Hardcover $12.50
Paperback $7.50

Classroom Management
by Walter Doyle, North Texas State University
1980. 32 pp.
Paperback $3.00

Death in the Life of Children
by Kaoru Yamamoto, Arizona State University
1978. 199 pp.
Hardcover $7.50